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RED-KNIFE, THE CHIEF;

OR,

THE ARROW-MAKER OF THE MIAMIS.

BY EDWIN EMERSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGE CAPTIVE.

CRUMPER'S STATION was one of those early pioneer posts, which existed at a time long gone, when Kentucky, in consequence of the many internecine collisions of unfriendly Indian tribes, won the name by which it has since been memorized, viz.—“The Dark and Bloody Ground.” Like other important posts of that day, Crumper's Station has escaped the attention of the historian, except, indeed, we be considered such, for in recording the forthcoming events we merely trace the almost obliterated line of a tradition, which, up to this time, has remained unwritten. It was situated on the Ohio river, at no great distance from Fort Washington (now Cincinnati), and many emigrants, coming down the river on flat-boats, chose it for their destination and home. Twice, prior to the time our story opens, it had been fallen upon by large bodies of Indians, but the strength of its fortifications and garrison, together with the skill and bravery of its defenders, had saved it.

One golden October day, when all was quiet in and around the fort, and few settlers were moving about, two men issued from the interior of the inclosure and moved slowly down the river-bank.

One of these was a young man of fine personal appearance, with active, robust limbs, and easy, graceful carriage. His features were well developed, and when at repose they gave him a look of earnest thoughtfulness, not unmixed with sternness; but when the lips parted in a smile, his pearly teeth

seemed to throw a ray of sunshine over his countenance, giving it such a merry, jovial expression that one might think it impossible for him to look serious. Ordinarily, his large dark eyes wore a thoughtful, almost pensive, look, and moved from one object to another with a languid, mechanical motion ; but there were times when they fairly sparkled and danced with enthusiasm, excitement or mirth. In fine, the casual observer would not be favorably impressed with Herbert Thurston's face. Invariably he would be set down as a lazy, spiritless fellow, possessing neither ambition nor energy enough to make his mark in this world. But a closer study, or a better acquaintance, showed how thoroughly one may be deceived by the first impression, and revealed much that at first escaped notice. The inhabitants of Crumper's Station would tell you that Herbert Thurston was a man of determined will, energy and spirit—bold as a lion in time of danger, but warm-hearted, forgiving, and gentle as a woman in his manners when peace held the mastery—ready to imperil his life for a friend, or throw it away entirely for those who were nearest and dearest to his heart.

His companion was an Indian—a friendly Wyandotte, who bore the name of Wapawah, or Red-Knife, and who, at the time of which we write, was the most daring wood-ranger and skillful and successful scout in the services of this fort. He was a young, athletic warrior, powerfully built, and as quick as a cat in his movements, and was positively good-looking in the face. He carried himself with graceful dignity, and was as stoically silent as the rest of his race, never speaking except when he found it absolutely necessary, and then expressing himself in the fewest possible words. Some years before, this young Indian had become an outcast from his tribe for the great offense of treachery—or, in other words, because he had taken pity on a beautiful girl-captive, and had set her free just in time to save her from death at the stake. For this his tribe had driven him out in ignominy and scorn. He had joined the whites, and was so well treated by them that he soon learned to love his new friends better than his own people. Indeed, with the old sore of his tribal disgrace rankling in his heart, he became a Wyandotte-hunter—a fierce hater of his race ; and, as the Shawnees were their allies, he hunted

them, also, with all that inappeasable vengeance which, to this day, characterizes the red-man, whose honor has been aspersed and whose life has been outlawed. Once on the trail, the young chief's whole nature seemed to change; from the pleasant-faced Wapawah he changed to Red-Knife, the outcast chief, and far and near his fame spread among the tribes.

These two men, as we have stated, left the fort and walked down to the river. Pausing on the bank, Wapawah folded his arms over his broad chest and turned a look of silent inquiry upon his companion. Herbert Thurston hesitated a moment, running his fingers through his hair, and seeming to reflect. Then he said:

"Wapawah, I have told you I desire to speak with you on an important topic, and one that requires secrecy. You may doubt the necessity of secrecy, but nevertheless I wish you to impart my suspicions and intentions to nobody. About two weeks ago, you will remember, you returned to the fort after a longer absence than usual, and told a story of a white man you had seen in an Indian village."

The Wyandotte nodded assent.

"Was it one of the Shawnee towns where you saw him?"

"No—Miami."

"Miami," repeated Thurston, musingly. "Is it situated on the river of that name?"

"Ugh!"

"How far above the Ohio?"

"Dat many mile," replied Wapawah, holding up both hands with every finger and thumb extended.

"Ten miles above the Ohio, and at least two days' journey to the mouth of the Miami," muttered the white man. "It isn't a great distance, after all, and by pushing steadily on, we would be able to reach the village on the third day after setting out."

The Indian was evidently puzzled by these remarks.

"How old was the man you saw among the Miamis?" asked Thurston.

"Not much old—hair *leetle* gray," answered the Indian.

"You did not learn his name?"

"No; me no talk to him. *See* him—dat's all."

"Are you sure he was a captive?"

"Much sure. He was a slave, too. He work hard all day makin' arrows for braves."

"Making arrows?"

"Yes; make 'em for de whole tribe."

"Wapawah," said Herbert, stepping nearer to his red companion, "the minute you told that story, a fortnight since, my suspicions were aroused. I believe the captive you speak of is a man from Crumper's Station."

The savage was silent, but all attention.

"I believe he is no other than Mr. Sedgewick," added Herbert, with marked emphasis.

"Who he?" asked Wapawah.

"Ah! I had forgotten you were never acquainted with him. He was taken captive before you came to this post. He was the father of Vinnie Sedgewick, who, you know, now lives with her uncle. One year ago, rumors reached the garrison here that a large body of Indians was about to fall upon us, and scouts were sent out in every direction to watch the movements of the enemy. Richard Sedgewick, being an old frontiersman, and having many times before acted in that capacity, here volunteered his services as scout, and went forth to discharge his duties as such. He did not go alone, but took with him that rascally nephew of his, Dick Hamilton, for what reason I can't imagine. The next day after their departure, Hamilton returned alone, bearing the sad intelligence of Richard Sedgewick's fate, reporting that the latter had been shot dead by a party of Indians in ambush, and that he (Hamilton) had effected his escape by flight, and repeatedly hiding in the tall bushes. I cannot explain why it is so, but to this day, I have not been able to convince myself if that Mr. Sedgewick was really killed on that occasion. His companion could not know to a certainty whether he was killed or wounded, for he had immediately taken to his heels to save his own life, and why isn't it possible that the man is still among the living?"

Wapawah shook his head quickly.

"Must sure be dead—Injuns on war-path save no pale-faces; may be he be alive—mustn't hope."

"You do not deny, then, that it is possible? Even that is something. But I brought you here to ask of you a favor.

Will you go with me to the Miami village on an errand of mercy—to see this poor man, and attempt his rescue?”

The Indian looked steadily at Thurston.

“You think it *him*?”

“It may be; but even if it is not, will it not be a pleasure to release any man from such a captivity?”

The Indian nodded.

“Then you will go with me?”

“Yes.”

“When?”

“In two—t’ree days.”

“So soon?”

“Sooner de better; poor pale-face sad—berry sad; s’pect he got squaw and little ones somewhere. Injuns *mean* to him—nebber let him leave his wigwam all day. We better go in t’ree days.”

“Good! Ever since you went away the last time I have been waiting impatiently for your return, in order to ask your advice and aid. From your description, I can not but believe that the unfortunate prisoner is Richard Sedgewick, and with such a belief, I could not forgive myself were I not to make an effort in his behalf. I was sure you would not refuse me your valuable assistance. We will start, then, at the time you propose. Don’t mention this to any one, for, if you do, it will certainly reach the ear of the young lady, Vinnie, and may awaken hopes that can not be gratified. Disclose the nature of our expedition to nobody, but, if questioned, say that we will explain when we return.”

“White brudder speaks well,” said Wapawah. “Red-Knife is with him!”

“Then the question is settled,” continued Thurston, his eyes brightening with a touch of enthusiasm. “We will do all in our power to liberate the white man, even though he be a stranger, which I think he is not. Shall we go in a canoe?”

“Best not,” replied the Indian. “De red men watch de ribber now—kill pale-faces in boats. We be safest trabblin’ on land.”

“On land it shall be, then.”

“Mus’n’t forgit danger. Heap danger in the wood. May be we nebber come back any more.”

"I fully understand that we will be beset by dangers at every turn, but the recollection of that shall not deter me."

"Hist!" exclaimed the Wyandotte, at this juncture, holding up his hand. "Somebody come dis way."

Thurston ceased speaking and listened. The hum of voices was distinctly heard, mingled with the sound of approaching footsteps.

"Whoever this is, don't mention the topic of our conversation," said Thurston, in a low tone.

"Red-Knife know what to do—he know what his tongue made for," was the significant rejoinder.

Just then a peal of merry laughter, like the jingling of silver bells, rippled through the air, and the next moment two forms emerged into view a few paces distant. They were slowly approaching, and evidently engaged in light and pleasant conversation.

One of the forms was that of a young girl, rather slight of figure, but faultlessly proportioned, and the embodiment of grace. In feature, she could not conscientiously be pronounced beautiful; but there was a certain something in her soft blue eyes that made ample amends for all that was lacking elsewhere. A luxuriant growth of auburn hair fell negligently about her shoulders and voluptuous bosom, forming a glittering frame for her calm, sweet face. She wore a broad-brimmed hat pushed back from her head, and in one hand she carried a small basket well filled with wild flowers of many kinds and colors.

The other form was that of a man, but of a man of extraordinary appearance. He was about twenty-one or two years of age, and was rather below than above the average stature of men, though heavily-built and brawny. He was not as prepossessing as Apollo, nor withal as intelligent, but notwithstanding that, he was a pretty good fellow in his way, as all who knew him testified. His hair was a light brown, long and straight, parted in the middle and brushed smoothly back behind his ears. He had large, dull blue eyes, and a habit of staring open-mouthed at any and every person he met. A slight down extending across his upper lip made that portion of his face a shade darker than the rest. If this poor fellow had frequently proved himself quite timid in trying moments

and was the butt of much ridicule and many practical jokes, among his friends, he was, on the other hand, good-natured and kind-hearted, as such persons are apt to be.

CHAPTER II.

THE NYMPH AND THE CLOWN.

"It is Vinnie Sedgewick and Tony Crane," said Thurston, and as he spoke his eyes kindled as if by magic, and a bright flush mounted to his temples.

"Yes, sir, it is Vinnie Sedgewick and Tony Crane," laughed the girl, who had overheard the remark. "And what of it, Mr. Thurston?" she added, looking saucily up into his face, as she and her companion paused in front of the two men. "Haven't we the right to go where we please, or must we bow to your imperial will?"

"The latter, to be sure, Miss Vinnie."

"You ain't boss of we," blustered Tony Crane, edging up to the young lady, and giving Herbert a look of defiance.

"That you are not, and you dare not harm me while I am under the protection of the valorous Mr. Crane," said Vinnie, and her merry laughter rung out again, clear and rippling as a mountain-current gliding over its rocky bed.

It was evident that Crane did not see the jest in this expression, for he drew himself up proudly, and frowned threateningly at Herbert. -which frown looked quite sickly in the total absence of eyebrows. It was also evident that this singular character was in love with the maiden, and regarded Herbert in the light of a rival.

"But, perhaps we are intruding," said the girl, "and if so, it behooveth us to pass on. I believe Mr. Thurston and Wapawah are hatching some scheme, and desire no audience."

"There, let me say, you are wrong," returned the former, smiling. "We came here to indulge in a little private conversation, it is true, but we have indulged in it from beginning to end, and now have no more secrets to discuss. Do

not tear yourself away on the conviction that your presence is unpleasant to me, for I assure you it is exceedingly the reverse."

"Indeed!" cried the laughing nymph, with a coquettish toss of her auburn tresses. "Are you not afraid to talk so gallantly to me, when Tony Crane is here, growing more and more jealous every moment."

"I am sure Tony will pardon me," said Thurston, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes.

"Don't be too sure," muttered Crane, with an injured look. "I ain't the best natur'd pusson in existence, nohow, and you've no right to talk to Vinnie in that style."

"Then you have no such right," declared the latter.

Crane colored to the roots of his hair.

"Hain't no sich right," he repeated, confusedly. "Reckon I goes with you more'n he does, don't I?"

"If so, it is not because you are invited, or even encouraged to do so," rejoined the girl, biting her lip in her efforts to keep a sober countenance. "Even to-day you were not requested to accompany me in my search for flowers."

Tony brightened.

"I thought 'twas my duty to go with you to-day whether I war axed or no, 'cause it wouldn't be right, nor manly, to let you go alone, when there's so many dangers in the woods."

"You went, then, to protect me?"

"Law sakes! of course I did. Here I am, a hearty young buck, strong as a lion and just as bold—"

"If you came to be my protector, why did you not do your duty?" demanded the girl, with pretended anger.

"How? Which?"

"Surely you have not forgotten, already?" she continued. "It has not been half an hour since you would have left me at the mercy of a monstrous rattlesnake."

"Why, why, my dear; you wrongs me, indeed you does?" exclaimed Tony, excitedly. "You furgits the snake turned out to be nothin' more'n a runnin' vine in the grass."

"I forget nothing. I remember you saw it first, and shouted '*rattlesnake!*' and then took to your heels with astonishing agility. You did not know it was a vine until I

made the discovery, and I suppose you would have been running yet if I had not called you back, and shown you your mistake."

"Good gracious! I hope you didn't think I's afeard? Why, bless yer little gizzard, I was runnin' after a stick or a stone fur to kill the blamed thing."

"That is very likely, as I remember there were a great many sticks and stones near the supposed snake, and none in the direction you took in your flight."

Tony looked like a fool now. In face, he never looked like any thing else, unless it was a baboon, and people might have been either jesting or prejudiced when they sometimes observed that he bore a resemblance to the animal mentioned. He could not reply to this last speech of Vinnie Sedgewick, so he stammered, and coughed, and looked foolish, and was inexpressibly angry because his rival was a witness of his mortification. And, worst of all, a stinging, torturing laugh broke from the lips of his idol, and in a fit of desperation he exclaimed:

"If you don't shet up I'll be dog-darned ef I don't go away and stay away! I'll go right off and git killed by the Indians, that's what I'll go right off and do!"

"That would be a rash act, Tony, but I shall offer no objection, for I know you are willful," said Vinnie.

"You git!" growled the injured lover.

"Let me tell you how to revenge yourself on her," interrupted Herbert, gravely. "In two or three days Wapawah and myself are going among the Indians, on a secret enterprise, and you may go also if you wish. Miss Vinnie Sedgewick will be glad enough to see you when you come back. He is at liberty to accompany us, is he not, Wapawah?"

With a faint smile the Indian nodded assent.

It was on Crane's tongue to inquire if there was much danger in the enterprise, but reflecting, just in time, that such a question might be construed in a manner contrary to his desire, he wisely refrained, and asked, instead:

"How do you know I wants to make one of you?"

"Why, didn't you say so? You spoke of going away to revenge yourself on the lady, and I think it's the best thing you can do. I am sure you are not afraid."

"Nobody dursen't say I am!" he replied, hotly. "I said I'd go away, and if Vinnie doesn't urge me to stay I'll keep my word."

"Rest assured I shall not urge you to stay," said Vinnie, coolly.

This surprised Crane, for he had expected her to change her tone now. But, timorous as he was, he would have risked almost any thing rather than be called a coward, so he declared that he would go if he were killed a dozen times.

"But you are not serious, Mr. Thurston?" said Vinnie, in a low tone. "You are not really going among the Indians?"

"To be sure," was the smiling rejoinder. "This is no joke by any means, but sober truth."

"And why do you risk your life in this manner?"

"Any other argument would deter me sooner than that of the risk incurred in the enterprise."

"I doubt it not; but it is the part of a fool, rather than of a brave man, to seek dangers unnecessarily."

"I admit all that, Vinnie, and much more if you like, but I do not deem this contemplated journey unnecessary. I think, indeed, you will say it is the wisest task I ever imposed on myself, when you learn the nature of it."

"You mean, then, to let me know the nature of it?"

Thurston laughed.

"Yes," said he, "you are to be let into the secret of our object in this undertaking—but not at present."

"And when, pray?"

"When we return."

"Not until you return? I don't want to know the secret at all, if you can't reveal it before it grows stale."

"That remains to be seen."

"How long will you be gone?"

"A week, I suppose; probably longer."

The young man eyed his interrogator narrowly as he tendered this piece of information, and he felt a tremendous throb beneath the bosom of his waistcoat as he saw her eyelids quiver and droop. Bending his head till his breath fanned her brow, he whispered softly in her ear:

"Do you care, Vinnie?"

"Care? What do you mean?"

"Do you care if I stay away so long? Would you care if I should stay away forever?"

"Oh! see that large flock of ducks!" cried the girl at that moment, clapping her hands excitedly, and seeming totally ignorant of the fact that Herbert Thurston was speaking to her.

A flock of water-fowls was flying low on the opposite side of the river. Tony Crane looked at them because *she* desired it, but Herbert turned away with a look of disappointment. He was vexed with himself, as well as with Vinnie Sedge-wick. He knew she had heard him, and that her sudden interest in the wild-ducks was an artifice to avoid answering his question. But he was quite cheerful again in a few minutes.

"Wapawah is leaving us," he said, at length. "Let us follow him."

As no objections were offered to this, the trio slowly followed the Indian to the fort, Herbert carrying Vinnie's basket of flowers, and she chatting gayly to him, greatly to Tony's uneasiness.

CHAPTER III.

A SNAKE IN THE GRASS.

OUR friends were scarcely out of sight, when a man climbed stealthily up the river bank, and stood erect on the very spot they had recently occupied.

He was a young man, his age not exceeding twenty-five years. He possessed a figure of fine proportions and muscular development, nimble and wiry as that of a panther, and it was evident at a glance that the strength of a giant lurked in his brawny, massive limbs. Altogether he would have made a good model for a painter. There was something wildly picturesque in his dark, sunburnt face, and at this moment his eyes partook of the tiger's ferocity as they flashed and glittered under the overhanging masses of jet-black hair. His features were coarse, though regular, and there was that in his heavy jaws and the savage, salient set of his lips that reminded you of a wild beast, and conveyed the impression that it were

better to give him as wide a berth as possible on all occasions.

Undoubtedly he had been concealed under the bank while the group of four were standing upon it, for now he stared in the direction taken by the little party with a look of fierce malevolence.

"So that is your game, is it?" he hissed, his sinewy fingers working convulsively. "By the Lord, Herbert Thurston, if you want to cross my path without my knowledge you must wake up before day. I'm a rascal, am I? Curse you! that polished tongue would not have dared to utter that word knowing that I was within hearing. But I heard it, and you shall rue it, or my name isn't Dick Hamilton."

He ceased speaking and strode backward and forward like a chained animal, his hat in one hand, his gun in the other, and his long black hair disordered and tangled. At length he stood still again. With a fierce imprecation he struck the empty air with his huge fist, and then exclaimed:

"I would not have had that suspicion enter his confounded head for the world! I have never believed uncle Richard dead, but until this hour I thought I was the only one who had a doubt on that point. I saw the Indians capture the old man and carry him away, instead of killing him as I reported, and that is why I have always thought of him as a captive in one of the Indian towns. Where Thurston got the impression I cannot imagine, but somehow Wapawah's story about the white arrow-maker of the Miamis has struck him just as it struck me. He, also, has a suspicion that the man is no other than Richard Sedgewick, held in durance vile as a prisoner and a slave, by the red-skins."

Dick Hamilton leaned on his gun, and looked thoughtfully into its dark muzzle. His broad chest rose and fell with the storm of passion that raged within, and his small, midnight orbs glittered like those of a serpent.

"So he and Wapawah intend rescuing the supposed Mr. Sedgewick? I'll see whether they do or not. Curse them! I'll take a hand in this game, and if my cunning and physical strength combined cannot get the upper hand of them I deserve to lose the girl. If they should succeed in their undertaking—or, whether they succeed or not—the affair will be spoken

of as Thurston's *disinterested* efforts in Mr. Sedgewick's behalf. Bah! they can't deceive me. I know a thing or two. Uncle Richard used to say that nobody was good enough for his little Vinnie but Herbert Thurston, and that he should have her. But since uncle Richard is gone, my father is Miss Vinnie's guardian, and by thunder! she must do just as *he* says. He hasn't much love for the Thurstons, and he'll never consent to a union between Herbert and the girl—never. No wonder the wretch wants to get the old man, to help him through the mire, since he can't have the girl while her father's supposed to be dead. By all the fiends! if my uncle lives he shall not be released from his captivity! Cousin Vinnie must and *shall* be my wife! My parents will it so, but her father would rather see her dead than a bride of mine. Young man, beware!" he added, savagely, shaking his fist at his invisible rival; "you cannot cross my path and live. So surely as the sun shines above us, my vengeance will overtake and thwart you!"

With this he donned his hat, slung his gun across his shoulder and strode away toward the fort. His eyes were upon the ground; his mind was absorbed in thought, and he saw nothing—heard nothing—remembered nothing, except that one other beside himself doubted that his uncle was dead, and that the latter's resurrection would be his own defeat.

"I, also, will go on a journey to the Indian towns," he muttered. "We'll see who wins. We'll see—we'll see!"

He had taken no more than twenty steps after leaving the river-bank, when he stumbled over something and came near falling. With an oath he looked down to see what was lying in his way. At the same instant a hoarse, croaking voice—more resembling that of a frog than a human being—cried out, angrily:

"Leave me alone, accursed wretch! I'll teach you to kick a fellow in that manner, when he's asleep. Take yourself off, you villain, or I'll break every bone in your body!"

A tiny little figure gathered itself up from the ground, where it had been lying asleep, with its head pillowed on the root of a tree. As it stood erect it was scarcely four feet in height, and yet it was the figure of an old man, with iron-gray hair, yellow, wrinkled face and hooked nose. His form

was uncouth and ill-proportioned, his legs being much too short for his body, and his arms being much too long for his legs.

In short, it was an ugly little dwarf that rose up and confronted the young giant, Dick Hamilton—as ugly a little dwarf as one would care to meet with, whose age might have been anywhere between forty and sixty. His name was Crispin Quiggs, and that was about all that was known of him by the people of Crumper's Station. He had made his appearance there a few months prior to the opening of our story, and none knew whence he came, or why. He was a lazy, worthless fellow, sleeping half the time, and the other half drinking whisky, as the honest toilers frequently remarked to each other. And, indeed, he did drink a vast quantity of liquor, though he never appeared so much under its influence that he was unable to take care of himself; and nobody in the settlement slept nearly as much as he. None knew aught of his past life, and the few who cared to inquire into it, were made none the wiser by the answers they received.

This was the person over whom Dick Hamilton stumbled in his blind, heedless walk, and when the young man turned round and saw who it was that had so nearly tripped him up, he glared at him like a wolf.

"It's you, is it, you little imp?" he growled, contemptuously looking down on the little man, much as a huge bull-dog would look down on a poodle that had barked at him.

"Yes, it's me," said the dwarf, in his harsh, croaking voice; "and I think things are coming to a devilish nice pass when I must submit to kicks and cuffs that are unprovoked. Take yourself off, sir, and leave me alone. I have a right to sleep as much as I like, and as long as I am peaceful you haven't the least right to molest me."

Dick Hamilton's lip curled, and he was about to turn away without deigning a reply, when a sudden idea struck him and rooted him to the spot. He looked again at the dwarf, keenly and narrowly, as if to read such of his character as he was not acquainted with. Then, with a patronizing air, he stepped forward and said:

"Quiggs, I beg your pardon for what I have done. You think I did it purposely; you mistake; it was purely accidental."

Crispin Quiggs looked astonished.

"You are mocking me," he said.

"I was never more serious, I assure you."

"Pray, are you blind, that you should kick me accidentally in broad daylight?"

"No; but I did not see you, nevertheless. I was in a brown study, and saw nothing. Indeed, my good fellow, the act was not intentional. I should never have known that you were in the vicinity if I hadn't fallen over you."

The villain paused to note the effect of his words on Quiggs, and then, after some hesitation, resumed:

"I have no ill-will for you, my friend, and, to prove it, I ask the pleasure of doing you a kindness."

"Of doing me a kindness!" echoed Quiggs, incredulously.

"Certainly," said the other, promptly.

"You'll do me a kindness by telling me what you mean."

Dick leaned on his gun, as was his fashion when standing, and gazed steadily at the parchment-colored, upturned face of the little old man that stood before him. He had never before exchanged so many words with the strange being, and he now saw in him something he had not previously observed, viz.: a demon that no one would be safe in rousing.

"Would you like to earn some money?" he whispered.

The dwarf's eyes twinkled avariciously.

"Would I?" he answered. "Try me, and see."

"Bravo! you're my man. In case you receive a goodly sum I suppose you will not be over 'choice as to how it is earned?"

"What do you mean?"

"That you will have no conscientious scruples about performing what some might term an exceptionable piece of work?"

The old man looked up at his companion, and smiled.

"That is your business, not mine," he chuckled, with a leer. "If the work is very unbecoming, the fault lies with you. I am only to be told what you want me to do, and the money is earned. If it is murder—"

Dick Hamilton gave a violent start, and glanced uneasily around. The dwarf indulged in a hideous grin.

"If it is murder—" he repeated, calmly, and paused again.

"Well, if it is murder?" whispered Dick, anxiously.

"You have only to tell me whose mortal coil you would like to see shuffled off," was the quiet rejoinder.

"Hush!" whispered Dick, with another searching glance round.

"Bah! you are weak-hearted," said Crispin Quiggs, looking up at his companion, contemptuously.

"Not so," returned the other, in as steady a voice as he could command, "but I would not have any one hear us talking about this for all the world. You're my man, sir; do you hear? You're my man. I am sure you will discharge your duty faithfully."

Crispin Quiggs rubbed his hands together softly, as he asked:

"How do I know you have gold with which to pay me?"

Hamilton thrust his hand into the breast of his hunting shirt, and drew forth a small, but well-filled leather bag, which he triumphantly held up to view. The dwarf held out his hand to take it. Hamilton quickly returned it to its hiding-place.

"When you have earned it," said he, "it is yours."

"Tell me, then, what you would have me do?"

Whereupon followed a long and earnest conversation between the two villains. They stood there at least an hour, talking, and at the end of that time Crispin Quiggs looked up, and remarked:

"I always supposed you were a villain, Dick Hamilton—now I know it. Ha, ha! But hear me, sir; you could not have procured a better companion for this business than I."

"Why not?"

"I will tell you soon enough," was the significant rejoinder.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAMP IN THE WOODS.

A LITTLE party of hunters, three in number, had just crossed the Ohio river, at the point where the Miami flows into it.

Night was closing in, and the party paused on reaching the Ohio bank of the stream, and went into camp. In a few minutes a cheerful fire was gleaming through the darkness of the forest, making restless and gigantic shadows among the trees, and lighting the faces of the three adventurers with a bright reddish glare, as they sat around it and smoked their pipes. They had chosen for their camp the point in the angle of the two rivers above mentioned. It was a dull, starless night, but scarcely less calm than gloomy. Not a breath of air was stirring, and the slightest noise could be heard at an **incredibly long distance.**

The reader must have conjectured that the adventurers referred to were no others than our friends, Herbert Thurston, Tony Crane and Wapawah, the Wyandotte.

They had been out two days, and a part of the third was to be spent in journeying up the Miami, before their destination, the Indian town, would be reached. Thus far, no incident worthy of record had transpired, but now they were in the very heart of the Indian country, and they were all aware that their lives were in imminent danger every minute they tarried there.

"We are even fortunate in reaching this point unmolested and without observing signs of red-skins," remarked Herbert. "Are we not, Wapawah?"

The Indian nodded his head. Then, after smoking a while in silence, he said:

"Much danger here'bonts—great much danger. Not stay if you don't want. Wapawah no fear."

"I started with the expectation of encountering innumerable dangers," said Herbert, calmly, "and I cannot consen-

to return until I have learned something about the arrow-maker."

"Good!" grunted the savage; "talk well; make good warrior; kill many enemies when the fight come."

"I'm blowed if I ain't gittin' tired of this business," asserted Tony Crane, glancing uneasily at the gloomy forest, and then at the dark, rolling water that flowed by on two sides. "Derned if a feller knows what minute he's goin' to git the hull top of his head sliced off. It's a imposition—that's what 'tis."

"What's the matter with you, Tony?" asked Thurston, smiling.

"Matter enough," was the reply. "I'm sick—awful sick! This sort of life don't agree with my constitution."

"Perhaps you had better turn back, and go home?"

"Eh? Go home *alone*?"

"To be sure. You are not afraid, I hope?"

"In course not; sartinly not; good Lord, no! *Me afeerd*! Yer hain't gone crazy, has yer, Thurston?"

"Not to my knowledge. But, if you are not afraid, why do you object to going home alone?"

"'Cause, you see—that is, you see—I don't want to go home alone, and leave you and the chief in this dangerous place. I ain't sich a coward as that. The fact is, I'm goin' fur to stick to yer through thick and thin, or perish in the 'tempt."

Tony mentally flattered himself that he had skillfully escaped committing his reputation as a gentleman of undoubted courage; but when he saw his companion clap his hands upon his sides and fairly roar with laughter, a suspicion that he was suspected began to dawn on his mind. He held a dignified silence, however, and waited for the other's mirth to subside.

But Wapawah did not seem disposed to wait. As the loud peal of laughter rung with fearful distinctness through the forest aisles, he grasped the young man's arm and exclaimed:

"Hush! Too much loud! Injuns hear."

The source of this warning was sufficient to prove its worth, and Herbert checked his mirth.

"Do you want to bring a hull raft of red-kins down onto us?" growled Tony, with an angry look. "Hain't yer got

no more sense nor that? You're a purty-lookin' chap to be cuttin' a shine round Vinnie Selgewick—you air?"

"I fear you are laboring under a delusion, my friend," said Herbert, biting his lips to keep a sober countenance. "You cannot think I would be so foolish as to aspire for Miss Selgewick's hand, while you are paying your addresses to her? I might as hopefully attempt to change the current of the Ohio."

Crane was immediately in good-humor. Crossing his legs under him after the approved Turkish fashion, he assumed a very lofty air, and looked condescendingly at Herbert.

"Yer candor pleases me, Thurston; indeed it do. Yer gives up the race like a sensible chap. Vinnie's a scorchin' nice gal, and I hain't no doubt she'll make a good wife. Reck on she ain't much at hoein' corn, and the like, but' yer's wha'll break her in. Think a heap sight of her, don't yer, Thurston?"

"How can you ask, Tony?"

Tony shook his head sadly.

"I pities you, Thurston, but yer knows as well as I does that we can't all have the same gal. Good Lord! what's the matter?"

This last exclamation was addressed to the Wyandotte, who, with body inclined, and one finger uplifted, seemed listening intently.

The two whites ceased speaking, and looked at him. Tony glanced furtively toward the point on which the Indian's gaze was riveted, and crept closer to Herbert, at the same time clapping his hand on his head, and beginning to feel a stronger attachment to his scalp than he had ever felt before. Herbert, with a vague sense of danger, swept a searching glance around and began to finger the lock of his rifle.

"What is it Wapiwah? What do you hear?"

"Listen!" admonished the Indian.

He listened, and in a moment heard a faint rustling close at hand. Silence followed almost instantly, and all continued to listen for a repetition of the sound. It soon came, soft but distinct, like that of a person moving with stealthy tread through bushes and brushwood. In a few seconds a shadowy form came into view a few yards distant, and stood stock

still, apparently surveying, at its leisure, the little group round the fire. In shape the figure was like that of a man, or, rather, a boy, for it was short and stumpy, and ungainly. It was evidently a human being, and although he did not look like a savage, yet he was regarded as an enemy, nevertheless; and Herbert, who was of this manner of thinking, had no sooner observed that the little stranger was playing the part of a spy, than he coolly lifted his gun to his shoulder, and took deliberate aim at the shadowy figure.

"Whoever you are, I shall not give you a minute to take yourself out of sight!" he cried, sternly.

The words had scarcely passed his lips when the figure vanished in the darkness as suddenly as it had appeared, sending back a clear, mocking laugh as it retreated!

CHAPTER V.

AN EXCHANGE OF SIGNALS.

WAPAWAH sprung nimbly to his feet, and whipped out a knife that flashed ominously in the firelight.

"What are you going to do?" asked Herbert.

"Goin' to foller de snake; goin' to see who he is; kill him, maybe," was the hurried reply. "You git back in de shadows; lie close to ground, and be still; wait till I come back; be back soon. Let fire burn."

With this he glided away as noiselessly as a serpent, his head bent almost on a level with his knees, and the knife still clutched tightly in his hand. The darkness swallowed him up at the exact point the little prowler had appeared and disappeared.

In obedience to the Indian's injunction, Herbert and Tony put up their pipes and crept back into the shadows, where the light from the fire could not reach them. Here, hugging the ground as closely as possible, they lay perfectly quiet, and awaited the return of their dusky friend.

"Things is beginnin' to look squally, ain't they, Thurston?"

whispered Crane, wishing to be certain that his companion had not left his side.

"Very," replied Herbert, briefly.

"Little to git knocked on the head, ain't we?" continued Crane, his teeth clattering in spite of himself.

"Way, certainly, if we are not quiet."

"That's wha—what I thought. I wonder if the red-skin is goin' fur to kill anybody?"

"Probably; but we must stop talking, Tony, or in all likelihood we will be overheard by some prowling enemy."

"Jest what I was 'bout to remark," said Tony, nervously "I s'pose you think thar's enemies all around us?"

"I fear as much," returned Herbert. "At any rate, we can not but deem ourselves in great danger. The figure that appeared to us within the moment must have been that of an enemy, though I'm of the opinion that it was not that of an Indian."

"Yer doesn't mean a white enemy?"

"There are many such in this region."

"See yer, Thurston," said Tony, in a very solemn whisper, "ef I gits killed to-night, tell mother as how I died in a noble cause, and tell Vinnie I'll wait fur her in heaving, and Sam Ragsap kin have my best boots and moccasins, and my clothes kin be made over fur brother Felix."

It was certainly no time to give way to mirth, but despite the serious feelings that filled his breast, Herbert could not help smiling at Tony's words and the manner in which he uttered them. But the impenetrable gloom hid this silent demonstration of the amusement he felt, and its object was none the wiser.

"Pshaw! you are foolish, Tony," he said, with assumed gravity. "You are not going to be killed."

"Thar's no tellin', young man," returned the other, with increased solemnity. "I hain't skeercedly a doubt that I'll kick the bucket afore mornin', but you know me well enough to bet yer bottom shiner I'll die game— Oh Lord! I'm shot—I'm shot! I didn't expect it so soon. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!"

The loud spring of a rifle near by had awakened the forest echoes while Tony was speaking, and caused him to give ut

terance to the ejaculations recorded. The bullet from the invisible gun went plowing through the bushes in which they were concealed, and seemed to come from the opposite side of the fire.

"I'm shot!" screamed Crane, writhing like one in mortal pain. "*Help! Murder! FIRE!* Tell Vinnie—tell—tell Sam Ragsap and brother Felix—"

"Fool! Idiot!" cried Thurston, in a hoarse whisper clapping his hand over the mouth of the terrified man, and shaking him with a will. "Cease your infernal howling, you cowardly dog, or by heavens *I'll* shoot you! You are not hurt. That ball passed two feet above our heads."

Crane left off struggling, and lay perfectly quiet, and as he made no attempt to scream again, Herbert released him. But his teeth chattered as though he were suddenly stricken with ague, and as soon as he could speak he asked:

"Are—are—you sure I ain't killed?"

"You have not received the slightest injury. You are a cowardly rascal—a chicken-hearted fool!"

"I wonder who fired that shot?" said Crane, not caring to argue the matter with his enraged companion.

"And here you were declaring you would die game, if you had to die, and the very next instant—"

"Did you see the chap as done that 'ere deed?" again interposed Tony, by no means willing to listen to such ex-
clamations, and pretending to hear nothing Herbert said.

At this, Herbert's anger fled and he was forced to smile again.

"No," he replied, "I haven't seen the person, nor have I heard a sound from him except the discharge of his gun. I suppose he's concealed on the other side of the fire, unless he fled after shooting at us, which is very likely."

"He must have had the eyes of a cat, to see us here."

"He did not see us; he merely knew we were here—probably saw us hide. Or, maybe he only suspected we were here, and fired that shot as an experiment. In such a case he might have gone off satisfied but for your cowardly howling."

Tony could not frame a suitable answer to this slanderous observation, so he prudently held his tongue.

In a few minutes Wapawah returned. He came out of the woods in that same crouching, stealthy manner in which he had entered it, but on reaching the fire he straightened up and glanced around. The two whites immediately came out of their concealment and joined him.

"What news, Wapawah?" Herbert inquired.

"Not much," replied the savage, still looking keenly around, as if he expected to see somebody else.

"You followed the person that was scouting round our camp?"

The Wyandotte nodded an affirmative reply.

"And saw him again?"

The Wyandotte nodded again.

Herbert glanced suspiciously at the long, glittering knife, which Wapawah still carried in his hands. The latter, divining his thoughts, shook his head and replied:

"No—not harm him; thought best let him alone. He white man from Crumper's Station."

"From Crumper's Station?"

"Yes. See him often dere."

"Who is he?"

"De little man; de little, old man, wid de short legs and de long arms. De *dwarf*."

"What! you don't mean Crispin Quiggs?"

"Yes; he de man."

"How came he here, I should like to know?"

"He not alone."

"Not alone? Who is with him?"

"De young giant—de Swaying Pine—much strong."

"You mean Dick Hamilton?"

The Indian signified assent. Herbert was amazed.

"What can be his object in coming here?" he muttered; "and why is he in company with Crispin Quiggs? I never saw them speak to each other, though I've seen them meet a hundred times."

"Wapawah followed de snake," said the Indian, "to a camp-fire over dere in a gully. Hamilton was dere; de dwarf join'd him; Wapawah kept in the dark; watched 'em till dey roll demselves in blankets and went sleep; den comed away."

"Do you think they are following us?"

"Maybe so; maybe not. No tell." Then, looking alternately at his white friends, the Indian inquired, with his customary abruptness: "Somebody shoot off a gun here. Who done it?"

Tony looked inexpressibly embarrassed, and tried to change the subject. But Herbert promptly explained that the author of the shot had not been seen; that they were evidently the parties fired at, though the ball had not come within two feet of them; and that it was his belief the marksman was still hidden somewhere in the vicinity. Wapawah then gave Tony a piercing look, and asked why he had raised such a loud cry. Tony replied that at first he had thought Taurston was shot, and could not repress his grief!

At this juncture they all heard a deep sound coming up from the river—a sound like the croaking of a bull-frog.

None but Wapawah heeded the sound. He started perceptibly as it fell upon his ear, and a change swept over his stony features like a fleeting ray of sunshine. He said nothing, but with a motion of his hand, as an injunction of silence to the others, he inclined his body and seemed to listen. The croak of the bull-frog came again, as hoarse, and deep, and lugubrious as before. Then he straightened up, and it could be seen that his small black eyes were twinkling quite merrily. Placing his open hands on each side of his mouth, as if to direct his voice properly, he sent forth a sound which was such an exact imitation of the croak from the river, that, but for their positive knowledge to the contrary, Herbert and Tony could have sworn it proceeded from the same source!

"What you mean by that?" drawled Tony.

Before an answer could be given to this inquiry, a soft footstep was heard near by as of some one approaching. Then a clump of bushes was parted by invisible hands, and the form of a man stepped forth into the firelight, and stood erect before the trio. He was a white man, too, or, rather, belonged to the race of white men; for his skin was tanned as brown as a nut, and there was little show of civilization in the character of his dress. Imagine a man of great physical beauty and Samsonian proportions, clad in the ordinary buckskin costume of the Kentucky ranger, and armed with the indispensable hunting-knife and flint-lock rifle—with a broad

bearded face, whose prevailing expressions are good-humor and fearlessness—with forehead concealed to the beetling eyebrows by a skin-cap that fits his head closely, and with masses of unkempt hair brushing his shoulders. Imagine all this, and you have a dim portraiture of the new-comer, as he stood confessed in the bright glare of the fire, coolly surveying each member of our little party.

CHAPTER VI.

A MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS.

"HELLO, chief! How are you, old kumrid?" said the ranger, in a rough but good-natured voice, extending a huge brown hand to the Wyandotte. "Yer knows *me*, I reckon?"

Wapawah seized the proffered hand and shook it heartily, with a gleam of pleasurable recognition in his face.

"Know Kidd always," he said; "know him signal, even. Heard de frog croak, and knowed it was Kidd. Make Wapawah feel good. Much glad to see white brother."

"Rather guess you are, chief. Wouldn't be natur'l if you warn't glad to see the best friend you ever had. Knowed my signal, eh? Course you did; else you wouldn't 'a' answered it so prompt-like, jist as you used to. I knowed you'd recognize it, so I thought I'd give you a little s'prise. But what sort of an expedition are you on now? Didn't expect to run afoul of you in these parts—mold me into buck-shot ef I did. Who's these chaps you've got in tow?"

The eccentric ranger turned his gaze upon the Wyandotte's friends, and regarded them with cool curiosity.

"I am Herbert Thurston, from Crumper's Station," said the young man, seizing the rough hand that was held out to him.

"Good 'nough handle fur anybody, and I'll wager my ha't you ain't the coon as'll turn tail on red-skins."

"Thank you."

"My handle's Kirby Kidd," continued the man, in his deep drawling voice, "and Fort Washington is my stoppin'-place

at present. I'm scout, ranger and Injun-fighter, all at the same time. Me and the chief, hyur, used to tramp the woods together, and do all our scoutin' side by side, but the forts got us separated somehow or other, and we hardly ever come together now. Reckon the red-skins hain't forgot the time we outwitted the cusses as war' goin' to string up Russell Trafford, several years ago?"

The Wyandotte smiled and grunted.

"Hain't heerd from Russell lately, I s'pose?"

"Free, four days ago," replied the warrior.

"No! What news?"

"Him well—squaw well—got lots papooses."

"Good! May they live forever. But who is this beaver you've got hyur? A stray 'un you've picked up?"

"I'm Tony Crane, from Crumper's," said that worthy, hesitatingly, seeing that he was expected to speak for himself.

Kirby Kidd looked at Tony a long time, with a roguish twinkle in his eyes; then there was an upward twitching at the corners of his bearded mouth, and at last his features relaxed into a prodigious grin, full of mischief and drollery.

"What's the matter," demanded Tony, angrily.

"Yer name's Crane, I b'lieve?" said the ranger.

"I've already told you so."

"Are you afeerd of Injuns?"

"Hain't afeerd of nothing," was the haughty rejoinder.

"But you don't like to be shot at in the dark, I take it," continued the old scout, significantly.

"What d' yer mean, I should like to know?"

"I mean, you're capable of getting skeert so powerful bad at times, that you think you're shot plum' center, and set up a caterwaul loud 'nough to wake the dead."

Tony reddened to the roots of his yellowish hair.

"It were you, then, as fired that 'ere shot?" he muttered.

Kirby Kidd laughed quietly.

"Wagh! wagh! 'twas a powerful scar' I give you," he chuckled; "but ef I'd thought you'd raise sich a hubbub I wouldn't 'a' fired. Calc'late this beaver ain't of much sarvice to you?" he added, turning to Thurston and Wapawah.

Herbert replied that they had brought Tony merely to cure him of his cowardice, if such a thing could be done, by in-

reducing him to a series of dangers; and Tony, on hearing this, was so exasperated that he mentally swore eternal enmity to the whole party, and began to think they were conspiring against him, and that all his cunning and prowess must be brought into requisition to defeat them!

"Did you overtake the little imp you follered a few minutes ago?" inquired the scout, addressing Wapawah.

The latter replied in the affirmative, and briefly related how he had tracked the dwarf to his camping-place in a gully hard by, where he had a companion in waiting; and he furthermore informed his old friend that the dwarf and his companion were from Crumper's Station.

"Don't keer a cuss whar' they're from," said Kidd, shaking his head; "they're a pair of sneakin' rascals, that's what they are, and I wouldn't trust either one of 'em out of my sight. The devil's in 'em; I knowed that as soon as I see'd 'em. Why, I've been watchin' them reptiles ever since long afore dark, and mold me into buck-shot! I soon found out that they were watchin' you like a couple of wolves. I heern a part of a conversation between 'em, too, and the big fellow, he swore by the Lord he'd upset Herbert Thurston's plans, ef he had to kill Herbert Thurston and somebody else besides. Did you say that war your name, youngster?"

"It is," was the reply, with a look of perplexity; "but I am at a loss to know why Dick Hamilton should use it in this manner. I never crossed his path in my life, to my knowledge, and he must have a mistaken idea of the nature of my plans if he wishes to upset them." This with a knowing look at Wapawah.

The Indian shook his head.

"Maybe he hide like snake in de grass—maybe he hear what we talk 'bout udder day."

"Surely, surely, he could not wish to frustrate the plans I was laying before you. On the contrary, one might think he would be ever joyful, and would offer me his assistance, instead of suddenly becoming my enemy, and wishing to kill me."

Wapawah made no answer to this, but shook his head again, and looked thoughtfully into the fire.

It was now decided that Kirby Kidd should become one of the party until its purpose was accomplished, and on express-

ing his willingness to do so, he was at once let into the secret of their object in journeying thitherward. When he had listened to the explanation from beginning to end, as it was briefly and hurriedly related to him, he turned upon Herbert a look of blended admiration and amusement.

"Does you often go out on sich a wild-goose chase, as this?" he asked, with a smile.

"I hope it will prove infinitely better than a wild-goose chase," replied Herbert, with a responsive smile.

"I hope so, too, youngster, though smash me ef 'tain't ten to one the captive 'll turn out to be somebody you never heern tell of. You deserve to meet with the best of success, howsomever, 'cause you're grit to the backbone. And that cuss, as you call Dick Hamilton, wants to upset a plan that have been formed to save his own uncle? That's a little the quarest thing I ever heern tell of."

A hurried consultation was now held between the old ranger and Wapawah, neither of whom deemed it the part of prudence to remain on that spot over night, under the surveillance of two men who, they had reason to believe were enemies to their project. To "give them the slip," and keep out of their sight as much as possible, was the ranger's proposition, which was deemed a feasible plan by all, and which Wapawah declared they had better put into execution without delay. They agreed to resume their journey under cover of the darkness, and travel until daylight, and then go into camp where they could not be found by those who were dogging their footsteps. In order to leave no trail behind them, it was decided that they should continue their journey by water. Wapawah said he had a canoe close at hand, if it had not been disturbed since the last time he had used it, and Kidd informed them that he also had one down by the river, which he had vacated but a few minutes before.

So they at once deserted the spot, leaving the fire to sink, and smolder, and die out at its leisure. Both of the canoes were produced and launched. By general consent Wapawah took the lead in his vessel, while Kidd, Herbert and Terry followed in that of the old scout. And in this manner they dipped their paddles, and, like so many phantoms, glided noiselessly up the broad Miami, under the gloomy screen of night.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENEMY AT WORK.

THE following morning dawned bright and cheerful, and the sun ascended into a cloudless sky, shining down through a lazy atmosphere that told of the approach of Indian summer.

Near the Miami river, about ten miles above its mouth, two men came to a dead halt on the brow of a steep hill, and dropped the breeches of their guns to the ground with a long breath of relief, as though they rejoiced in the completion of a long and tedious journey. And, indeed, such was the case, for the men were Dick Hamilton and Crispin Quiggs, who, having pushed steadily forward since early morning, had arrived in good time at their destination. The hill on which they had stopped overlooked a broad, beautiful valley, which was wooded only on the side farthest from the river, and in the center of this low plain nestled the Indian town, consisting of more than a hundred lodges. Gaily-dressed savages, male and female, old and young, could be seen moving about through the village and adjacent woods, like a lot of bees swarming about their hives, while a number of dogs sported in the sun, and several horses quietly cropped the grass in different parts of the valley. Smoke ascended lazily from the smoke-huts, and floated away at the mercy of the gentle breeze that was stirring, and in spite of its wild, savage appearance there was an air of cheerfulness and comfort about the village that rendered it quite attractive.

Hamilton and Quiggs concealed themselves in a thick copse on the hill, where they had the whole valley under their inspection, and, settling down as comfortably as possible, they looked inquiringly at each other, as though each invited the other to begin the consultation.

"Well, we're here," said Dick, at length. "What next? We have lost sight of Thurston and his party, and have no idea where they are at this moment. I suppose we must do

here until nightfall before we can act, and in all probability they will be at work at the same time."

"And we don't want to wait till they are at work before we begin?" said his accomplice, with a smile of singular import.

"Hardly; but there is no alternative."

"I tell you there is."

"Eh?"

Dick Hamilton looked surprised. The dwarf pushed back his iron-gray locks, and repeated, with increased emphasis:

"I tell you there is," and the dwarf laughed.

"See here, young man," said he, "when you told me your troubles, and procured my services for this expedition, didn't I tell you that a man more suitable for the work than I could not have been hired?"

"You made a remark to that effect, but did not explain it."

"I will do so now. It may surprise you, but a little surprise now and then isn't going to hurt anybody." Quigge leered at his companion, with an ugly grin, as he went on: "I say, Hamilton, did you ever wonder where I hailed from when I appeared at Crumper's a few months ago?"

"Never thought of such a thing—didn't care, in fact."

"Ha, ha, ha! Your interest was not awakened then? But this is wasting time. I came from the Indians."

"From the Indians?"

"Yes; I lived with them for four years before taking up my abode at Crumper's."

"The deuce! A—a renegade, I suppose?"

"Not exactly. I was captured by the red-skins, and never exerted myself to give them the slip. I didn't care where I lived, if I lived in a place where I could get plenty of whisky and plenty of sleep, and both were to be had there. I was soon looked upon as one of them, and they ceased to watch me, and I was allowed to wander where I would; so I staid. But one day an inclination to see the people of my own color at the settlements took possession of me, and I left without bidding them good-by. I can go back among them whenever I choose, and in perfect safety. Now tell me if I am not the very man you want for this

business, and whether it is necessary to remain idle all day or not?" concluded the little man, in a triumphant tone.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Hamilton, exultingly. "The devils on my side, at any rate. We need not lie in idleness until daylight. We'll outwit our enemies even yet. They will wait till it is dark before they can do any thing, whereas we need not wait an hour. This is capital. Was it the Miamis with whom you were living?"

"Yes."

"In this village?"

"No. I lived at another town several miles north of this one."

"Then they will not know you here."

"Fear not; they all remember me. I have come to this place innumerable times, carrying messages, and it isn't likely I am so soon forgotten by my dusky acquaintances. I would much sooner trust my life with those Indians yonder, than with my former captors, at the present time."

"Why?"

"Because, if I should now return to my captors, in all probability they would punish me for running away."

"Perhaps these red-skins know of your escape and will seize you."

"So much risk I am willing to incur, when lured on by gold. I'll pull the wool over their eyes; trust me for that."

"Since you have been in yonder village so often, I suppose you have frequently seen the old arrow-maker that has brought us hither?"

"Never saw him in my life."

"Indeed! then he could not have been there?"

"I don't know, but it is more than probable that he has been there ever since the hour of his capture. The red-skins keep him hid, I opine, and let no pale-face, however friendly, know of his existence. But I will find out whether he is there or not. There is no need of wasting more time. I will go at once. You have nothing to do but wait quietly here till I return."

Crispin Quiggs took up his rifle, and pulled his slouched hat further down on his forehead.

Dick Hamilton leaned forward and whispered:

"If you see him—" and paused.

"If I see him—" smiled Quiggs.

"You know what to do," said Dick, faintly.

The dwarf laughed, and drew a long dagger from his breast, which he turned over and over, with a look of admiration.

"I'll plunge it to the hilt in his heart," he hinted, with a sickening grin. "If I see him I shall not leave the breath of life in his body. But," he added, "I can't guess why you want your own uncle to die."

"That does not concern you," was the surly rejoinder. "Gratify my wishes, and—" He finished the sentence by producing the bag of gold, holding it up before his confederate for a moment, and then putting it out of sight again.

A greedy glitter of the eyes told how this act affected the avaricious dwarf. But without another word he turned on his heel and strode away. He left the coppee, and was at once exposed to the view of the savages. He walked straight toward the village, as rapidly as his short legs could carry him, and with an air of easy fearlessness, proving the truthfulness of his assertion that he had lived with the savages and was their friend.

Dick watched him as he moved away, and continued to watch him until he entered the village and was lost to view among a number of Indians who crowded round him. Then, satisfied that Quiggs was safe, he sunk back into an easy position, though he was flushed and trembling with excitement, and prepared to await his return. The varying expressions of his countenance told that his thoughts were now moment of a pleasant nature, and the next gloomy, as they passed, probably, from the reflection that he was nearly defeating his rival, to a recollection of the horrible crime he was about to commit to bring about this defeat. If he momentarily praised his own slyness one instant, he almost cursed himself for it the next. If he was overjoyed one minute by the thought that Vinnie Selgwick would be his, after all, he was tortured the next by another thought that brought up a bloody vision before his mind's eye, and which was closely connected with Crispin Quiggs' present errand to the Miami town.

The sun reached the meridian and passed it. The hours dragged slowly by, and still Dick Hamilton was alone. By this time he was burning with impatience, and chafing in his lonely hiding place like a prisoner in his cell. But just as he was beginning to believe that Quings was detained forever by the savages, and when the afternoon was more than half gone, he saw the dwarf coming. To his surprise, when the little man reached the summit of the hill he walked straight on, and passed the coppice without looking either to the right or left. Suspecting that he had lost the place, Hamilton was about to call to him, when he instantly reflected that he might be doing it designedly, and held his tongue. In a few minutes, however, the bushes parted on the other side, an ugly, grinning face appeared, and the next instant the dwarf was reclining on the ground beside his *comfrere*. He had chosen this circuitous way of coming in, for the purpose of deceiving such of his red friends as might be watching him from below.

"What success?" inquired Hamilton, eagerly.

"Not the best in the world," was the unsatisfactory reply.

The young giant eyed him narrowly.

"No blood shed yet?" he asked, in a husky whisper.

"Not a drop."

"Cursed you for a coward!" he cried, fiercely.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the dwarf; "you're growing huffy now, and you shouldn't do it so soon. There is excuse for it, as I haven't seen nor heard of the arrow-maker, but what's the use—"

"What! you haven't been there all these hours without seeing the man or learning something about him?"

"I have."

"Then you are an idiot as well as a coward."

"Let me hear no more such talk as this, Dick Hamilton. I am not accustomed to it. If I did not see the man it is not because I did not look for him. I was in every lodge in the village, and did not leave until I was positive he was not there."

"Not there? Then what has become of him? Why did you not make inquiries concerning him?"

"Because I was not desirous of exciting suspicion in the minds of the red-skins, which such a course would certainly have done. I am of the opinion that they kept him hid somewhere, though he's in none of their wigwams, I am confident."

"Where, then, can he be?"

"That remains to be found out. I haven't given him up. I took notice there was quite a number of arrows in every wigwam I entered, and I also observed that they were all precisely alike and evidently made by the same hand. There must be such a person as the arrow-maker, somewhere, and we must find him before we leave this vicinity. Wapawah knows where he is, and I'll watch him if he attempts to rescue him to-night."

CHAPTER VIII.

STEALING A MARCH.

At a distance of a half-mile below the Indian town was an island—a long strip of land in the very center of the Miami river, green and beautiful, and densely wooded with willow trees.

As it seemed to be an excellent place for concealment, as well as for rest, Wapawah and his party landed on this island, and hid the canoes under the bushes that skirted it. Here they remained the whole day, almost in sight of their deadliest foes, not daring to kindle a fire, but keeping their hunger in check by a small supply of cooked provisions they had brought from the fort. Indians were seen several times during the day, generally in canoes crossing the river above them, but once in a while in the forest opposite. For all this they were not discovered in their hidden hiding-place, although Tony Crane declared repeatedly that they would be, and often mistook the leaping of a fish in the water for the dip of an oar. Of course the hours dragged, as they waited there in idleness for the coming of night, but, as Hecart began to grow restless, the eccentric old seer, Kirby Kid,

distinguished himself as a skillful killer of time by relating stories of wild adventure and hair-breadth escapes, in which he and the daring Wyandotte were the principal actors.

When the sun went down, and the golden October twilight began to give way before the advancing gloom of night, it became a question who should accompany the Wyandotte to the Indian village. It was a question soon settled, however. As it was not deemed prudent for more than two to go, and as there was comparatively no skill or caution required of those who remained behind, it was decided at once that Herbert and Tony were the ones to be left on the island, and that the Indian should be accompanied by his old friend, the ranger. To this decision, as may well be supposed, Tony offered no objections whatever. Herbert was disappointed when he saw that he was to have no hand in the rescue, but he was prevented from demurring by the reflection that they stood a better chance of success as it was. So he contented himself with remaining on the island, in company with Crane, and thinking of Vinnie far away at Crimper's Station, and anticipating the pleasure of soon restoring to her the father she had long supposed immortal. The vague belief that Richard Sedgewick was not dead, had grown upon the young man until, at this moment, he was almost ready to accept it as an established fact that the white captive the Wyandotte had spoken of, was the very man who was lost one year ago, and whom nobody but himself expected to see again on earth.

As soon as it was fairly dark, Wapawah and Kidd pushed one of the canoes into the water and entered it. After giving a few directions to Herbert and Tony, and agreeing upon a signal by which the latter were to be apprised of their approach, the paddle was dipped and the frail vessel darted into the darkness like a startled thing. Wapawah, seated at the paddle, kept the craft straight toward the shore, and the two canoes halted at a point directly opposite the landing. The night was without a moon, and sufficiently dark to favor their undertaking. As they stepped ashore, and drew the canoe up after them, they paused on the bank long enough to hold a whispered consultation and decide upon the course they were to pursue.

"You've seen the chap and knows whar' to find him?" said Kidd.

"Yes, me know," replied Wapawah. "Won't find him in de village; no find him dere; he no be dere."

"What's that you're sayin'? Won't find him in the village?"

"No."

"That's quare."

"He no live in any of de wigwams," repeated the Indian.

"Whar' *does* he live, then?"

"Wait; find out soon 'nough; Wapawah show."

Nobody understood Wapawah's ways better than Kirby Kidd, and for this reason he asked no more questions concerning the whereabouts of the captive, but said instead:

"Lead on, chief. You're commander of the expedition, and it ain't fur this beaver to swar you don't know yer business."

Stealthily, noiselessly, the two men glided away through the dark forest, keeping near the river bank and moving upstream. Their progress was slower than was absolutely necessary, but they knew they had the whole night in which to perform their task, and that extreme caution was more essential to their success than haste. Neither of them could prevent a belief that Dick Hamilton and Crispin Quigg were somewhere in the vicinity, and were there to defeat their plans, but neither broached the subject to the other. Silently they moved on, scarcely breaking a twig in their plantigrade march, Wapawah in advance with his trained eyes constantly on the alert, and the runner, not a jot less watchful, following close upon his heels.

In a short time they came in sight of the village. They crept up on the summit of the ridge, and for a few moments watched the scene in the valley below them. There were many fires to be seen, and numerous smoking lodges in a large portion of the plain. It was early, and the savages in all parts of the village seemed in the act of preparing their evening meals. Besides the fires that could be seen in large numbers out-doors, lights shone from the interior of many of the lodges, and smoke poured from the orifices at the top.

To our hunters this was a cheerful sight, for the air was chilly, and the warmth of a good fire would not have been the most uncomfortable feeling they had ever experienced. But the more important matter that filled their minds, gave them little chance to think of this.

"Which direction shall we take now?" asked Kidd. "Calculate we've gone 'bout as fur as we want to go, this way, unless we wants to march in among them red-skins do 'thar'."

"No do dat," said the Indian. "No find white dere."

"Then, whar'll we find him?"

"Wapawah show. Foller Wapawah."

As he spoke he turned abruptly to the right and began to move along the ridge. Kidd followed implicitly. Proceeding in this direction, they neither increased nor lessened the distance between themselves and the village, but kept the latter constantly in sight. They did not speak to each other, but maintained a strict silence, and kept up an unremitting watch on every side, for such enemies as might chance to be lurking in the wood around them.

They had gone but a rod or two, after changing their course, when Wapawah stopped and recoiled so suddenly that the ranger thought he had accidentally set his foot on a rattlesnake, or something of an equally dangerous character. But Wapawah was peering straight ahead, and he raised one hand with a quick backward motion, which the ranger well understood was a signal to stop. He did so, regarding the Indian for a few seconds in silence; then creeping close up to him he whispered softly:

"What is it? What do you see?"

"Somebody dere, in our path—'bide' in bushes," was the reply, as he pointed to a dark coppiece in front of them.

"Did you hear 'em move?"

"No—heard *cough*."

"D' yer think they're reds?"

"Maybe so—maybe not. No tink dey Miami."

"Think they're not Miamis? Why?"

"'Cause Miami no sneek round he own town."

"Wal, I reckon you're right thar; but—"

"Sh!"

At that instant another low, half-stifled cough proceeded from the interior of the coppice before them. Wapiwah turned to his friend, and said:

"Stay here; me see what 'tis. Come back soon."

"All right; slide ahead."

Wapiwah clutched the haft of his knife, bent his slender figure till his black hair lay almost horizontally down his back, and crept forward without the slightest noise.

In a moment he was swallowed up by the darkness. True, as his eyes were for the present out of service, Kidd put his ears on the alert. All was still. Not a sound was heard, save an occasional shout from some dusky inhabitant of the village below, or the rustle of the dry foliage overhead as the wind swept through it. There was a minute of suspense; then the scout heard a guttural exclamation—a fierce, muttered curse—the sound of a blow—another exclamation—another fiercer curse—and then came a noise as of two or more persons struggling desperately in the coppice!

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE COPPICE.

KIDDY KIDD felt that the time for action on his part had come. He did not hesitate an instant. The snuffling sound, mingled with the creaking and snapping of branches, told him that his friend was engaged in a close struggle with some long-armed, close-fisted, was in danger. That none but a native who could follow a lead as good as that of Wapiwah, the Wyandotte, in the presence of Kiddy Kidd, would specially commend to the consideration that to turn one's back to a combatant, with the long arm of the other.

Clutching his gun with both hands, he suddenly thrust forward with the agility of a panther. With two or three long leaps he cleared the intervening space, and was on the spot where the contestants were at work. He took in all at

a glance. Before him, locked in a close embrace, were two men, struggling desperately with each other, and putting forth all the strength that lay in their powerful frames. He reeled to and fro—backward and forward—now howling, now roaring—ever striving in vain to free himself from the other's clasp. They roared and panted like furious tigers—neither speaking a word, or making a sound, save by his heavy breathing. One of them was Wyandotté; even in the darkness he could tell that the other was a man of his own color. He perceived that he was at this discovery, it did not prevent him from rendering the former his assistance. White man or not, he must be a friend of the Indians if he was an enemy to the Wyandotte, and whosoever was the Wyandotte's enemy was also his. At another time, and under other circumstances, he would have stood idly by and watched the contest, with all confidence in his red friend's ability to overthrow his opponent; but at the present time, and under the present circumstances, he considered such a course not only a waste of time, but dangerous, since the stranger might, at any moment, completely destroy their plans by a single outcry.

All these thoughts flashed through the ranger's mind in a twinkling, and he had no sooner fairly observed how matters stood than he began to leap nimbly round the two men, looking for a chance to put in a blow. His gun-stock was upraised, ready to strike, and he had no sooner gained the desired opportunity than it descended with the quickness of lightning. There was a faint gleam; the sound of a stinging blow; a deep groan, and the white slipped out of his adversary's arms, and lay upon the ground, a dark, insensible heap. Wyandotté, finding himself suddenly relieved of his task, looked at Kadi with a grant of satisfaction and then began to feel round among the bushes in search of his knife, which he soon found and returned to his belt. Kadi dropped upon his knees beside the fallen man, and rolled him over on his back, trying to obtain a view of his face, and half-expecting to recognize him.

"I wish that's light enough to give me a glimpse of his face," he remarked. "Maybe I knows him. Big feller, ain't he? Mold me into buck-shot! He's got the muscles of a grant."

"Ugh! much strong," said Wapawah—"very much strong. Big warrior; fight hard; great fight."

"Yes; I reckon you met your match this time, if you never did afore. You're stuck on the inside, chief, I allow, but shoot me if I don't believe this big old snake are bound equal to you, in point of muscle. He's a regular Samson."

"Much strong," repeated Wapawah.

"Do you know him?" asked Kidd.

"Yes; he from Crumper's Station."

"Who is he?"

"Big warrior of pale-faces; Swaying Pine; Dick Hamilton."

"Dick Hamilton, is it?—one of the confounded reptiles that war' sneak in' round yer camp last night?"

Wapawah answered by an affirmative nod.

"And you ketch'd him hidin' in this thicket?"

"Ugh! he was crawlin' away like serpent—I lay hand on him—axed who I be—told him Wapawah—said big oath, den struck me on de breast wid fist—den we grappled."

"Couldn't you 'a' run yer knife into him at the first?"

"No want kill him; he pale-face."

"Blest the difference. He's a disgrace to his color."

But Wapawah argued that they were not justified in injuring the man, as they could not prove that he was an enemy until he had done something detrimental to their plans.

"What, then, shall we do with him?" asked the younger.

"Leave here," was the brief response.

"Let him go free?"

"No; tie hands and feet, so can't git away. Can't tell him wid us; when come back, set free."

"Maybe that cussed dwarf ain't far away. Maybe he'll come 'long and set the snake free 'fore we kin get back."

"Let him do it—can't help it. Got cord?"

"Plenty of it."

Kidd produced some buckskin thongs, and the operation of binding their prisoner began. He was still in a crouch; had he not been, it would have been exceedingly difficult for the united strength of those two powerful men to secure his limbs. As it was, they stretched him on his back, and while

one lound his ankles with the stout strips of buckskin, the other tied his wrists together.

"Wonder how much longer the feller's goin' to stay senseless? I reckon I give him a harder lick than I intended. Hope 'tain't 'n' to end his lartly career, though I'll swear to 'treats I've seen better men than him kick the backer. Let's cut sticks, Injun."

"All well—come 'long. Leave de Swaying Pine alone let him sleep; he can't do us no harm 'n' more."

As he spoke, Wapawich turned his back on the scene, and glided noiselessly away. Kirby Kidd fell in behind him, and leaving their prisoner to his fate, they resumed their silent march along the ridge.

But they had no sooner left the thicket, than Dick Hamilton cautiously raised his head and gazed sharply in the direction they had gone. His eyes fairly blazed with passion, and he clenched his teeth like an infuriated beast!

"Cuss them!" he muttered; "they have gone away and left me to endure, as best I can, the tortures of these confounded cords."

Hamilton's senses had returned at the very moment his captors had completed the performance of binding his wrists and ankles. In the darkness they were not aware that his eyes had opened, and when he saw that he was helpless, and that the best notice on his part was likely to increase his danger, he feigned unconsciousness, and lay perfectly still until they had departed.

"I believe I could have killed that red-skin," he growled, to himself, "if that white man had not interfered. Timber! how my head aches! Wonder who that fellow is? He seems to be a particular friend of the Wyandott's. Some old enemy, I suppose. Curse my folly! They would not have noticed me had I had met them peacefully, and told a lie or two to get me my freedom here. How long must I remain in this bondage? That's the question. These fellows are down south of the river, and I don't know how long they will be staying when Quiggs will return."

"Hush!" exclaimed a low, but yet a hoarse, croaked an unmistakable voice at his side.

"Hush?" exclaimed Hamilton, joyfully.

He looked up. A dark form was bending over him, whose imperfect proportions proclaimed it the form of no other than his friend, Crispin Quiggs.

"Good gracious, Quiggs, is this really you? How fortunate! How came you here, anyway?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the dwarf; "what are you lying there for? Been getting yourself into trouble, eh?"

"True! Why, man, I'm about as neatly used up as ever I was. There doesn't seem to be more than half my head left, and these infernal cords are killing me by inches."

The dwarf laughed again at this.

"How came you in this pitiable condition?" he asked.

"Don't stand there asking questions all night," cried Dick, angrily. "Cut these cords, so that I can get up."

Quiggs drew his knife, and with two or three quick slashes set the young Samson free. The latter rose to his feet, cast aside the remnants of the thongs and shook himself like a dog.

"By thunder! that was a little the toughest tussle I ever got into," he muttered, feeling his arms, and then raising his hands to his head. "I don't want another such blow very soon. Struck devilish hard. But, I say, Quiggs, did you just this minute get back?"

"Yes; I've been spying around the village for an hour, without even gaining a prospect of success. I can't find out where they keep their white slave, unless I make inquiries of one of the Indians, and that shall be my next step, in spite of the suspicion it may arouse. I haven't seen any of Tharson's party, as yet—"

"I have," interrupted Dick.

"You have?"

"Yes. I've seen more of Wapiwah and another big fellow, within the last ten minutes, than I want to see very soon. They were the rascals who knocked me down, and bound me hand and foot."

"The dance?" exclaimed the dwarf, excitedly. "English?"

Whereupon Hamilton related briefly how Wapiwah and a white man had come of a party; how he had closed in a struggle for life with one, and the other had finished him down; and how they had tied him securely, and left him to his fate.

Quiggs seemed delighted, as he listened.

"You say your senses returned the moment before they left you?" he asked, hurriedly. "And you saw them go away?"

"Exactly."

"Which way did they go?"

The desired information was promptly given.

"By heavens! we'll follow them," cried Quiggs. "Come, Hamilton; we'll dog their footsteps, and prevent them from rescuing the man."

"Must I accompany you, or stay here?"

"Accompany me, of course. Your strong arm may be needed."

Together the two villains left the coppice, and followed swiftly but stealthily in the footsteps of the two champions.

CHAPTER X.

THE VALLEY CAVE.

WAPAWAH and his friend proceeded along the summit of the long ridge of hills, which turned gradually to the left as it swept in semi-circular form round the village. Their way was not again obstructed by human obstacle, but once in a while they came to places they found some difficulty in passing. Nevertheless, they pushed on with all possible speed, time being quite precious now, as both had secretly conceived the idea that they would soon be followed by Jack Hamilton and Crispin Quiggs. Neither of these warriors was an object of personal fear in their eyes, but they fully acknowledged to themselves that the witches might be able to upset their plans, if allowed the advantage of time.

At last they reached a point directly in the rear of the village, if we may so term that part of the village farthest from the river. Here they paused and listened. No sound, betokening the proximity of foes, was heard, though they had expected to hear footsteps behind them. They stood on a

high and steep eminence, and beneath them was a dense patch of timber, extending a short distance along the base of the hills on either hand. As we have previously intimated, this was the only part of the valley that was wooded, and that would afford concealment to such pale-faces as possessed the hardihood to venture within the precincts of the Miami valley.

They did not stand still a minute.

"Move on," muttered Kidd, glancing back over his shoulder. "Them cusses may have some way to git the upper hand of us, ef we give 'em time enough to overtake us."

Alluding to Hamilton and Quiggs.

"No give 'em time, den," returned Wapawah. "Come on."

And, instead of continuing in the direction they had been moving, he coolly began to descend from the high eminence to the valley below.

"Hey? Goin' down thar'?"

"Yes; come on."

Kidd followed without another word, and they began to move down the declivity toward the subjacent wood. At this point it was quite steep, and it required all the skill of the experienced scouts to step without sending a shower of loose stones rattling downward. This would have created a noise which it behooved them to prevent if possible, considering that the success of their plans depended upon the stealth with which they were executed.

But, as good luck would have it, they reached the base of the hill without betraying their presence to the vigilant sentinels.

Here they paused again. They were now in the dense grove of trees that covered this part of the plain, and it was so dark they could scarcely see their hands before them. Standing under the low branches of a large tree, they combined the acuteness of their ears and listened intently for a few moments. They only heard the rustle of the autumn leaves, the distant scream of a panther, and a variety of natural sounds from the village. Obviously, they had proceeded thus far undiscovered.

"No more danger of makin' a noise," observed the ranger, feeling the contrast between the stony hillside and the soft grass his feet now pressed. "But let's push on, kinnid."

Wapawah moved on, and the ranger followed. The darkness now rendered their progress necessarily slow, as they moved warily along the base of the hill, among trees, and logs, and brushwood that could not be seen.

They had not taken fifty steps in this direction when they both stopped and drew back as of one accord. Right in their path, a short distance ahead of them, was a broad ray of light streaming through the trees from some invisible source, and flooding a small strip of ground with its rufescent brilliance. It was like the light from a camp-fire, but to all appearance it came out of the solid side of the hill, and was from no fire at all! Wapawah was silent, as this sight came under their observation, but Kirby Kidd, whom it seemed to puzzle considerably, was not slow in expressing his surprise.

"What in creation does that 'ar' light signify?" he exclaimed, speaking, however, in a soft whisper. "Whar's the fire it comes from? and who wants to camp hyur? Mold me into a buck-shot ef this don't seem kinder cur'us to me."

The Wyandotte was silent still.

"D' you understand it, chief?" asked the ranger.

"Yes; me understand well," was the cool response.

"Thee does yer does! Now see 'yer, Injun, you'd do me an everlastin' favor by explainin' the meenin' of this."

"Dat light," said the Indian, pointing toward it, "dat light, he come from fire—de fire, he in de cave."

"In the cave! Fire in the cave! Skulp me fur a Mingo! that explains the hull thing. Thar's a cave thar', and that fire's shinin' out of it, and may I be ground into gunpowder if that cave ain't the place whar' the white—"

"De cave is de place where he lives—where de white captive lives—de sad old warrior—de arrow-maker," interrupted the savage.

"Just what I war 'bout to ejec'ute," said the ranger. "I see through the hull thing now. The white man are confined in that underground hole, and compelled to work like blazes all day long. We kin steal him away 'thout any trouble if he's in thar'."

Wapawah shook his head, but remembering that such an answer could not be understood in the darkness, he added:

"No git him easy. Have much trouble, maybe."

"How—"

"'Sh! Look!"

Wapawah pointed toward the cave. The act was unnecessary; Kidd's eyes were upon the spot, and he plainly saw a shadow pass through the stream of light—a shadow that greatly resembled a human figure.

"Injun, by thunder!" muttered the ranger.

"Yes, him Injun," conceded the Wyandotte, quietly.

"What's he thar' fur?"

"To guard de slave."

"Do they keep the chap guarded all the time?"

"Not all de time—sometime."

The ranger scratched his head.

"We've got to pass that imp some way, skulp me if we ain't. Reckon his life's worth no more'n other red-skins'. Is the white man allowed any freedom inside the cave?"

"No—wear chains—big, heavy chains."

"Does, eh? That's awful unhandy. You've seen this arrow-maker, chief; how did you get into his presence?"

"Went in with Miamis; thought Wapawah enemy to pale-face; great medicine-man take him in. Good!"

"How are we goin' to take his chains off?"

Wapawah shook a small satchel he carried at his side. Something in it rattled, with a metallic sound.

"What you got in thar'?" asked Kidd.

"Tools," he replied; "tools take chains off man's feet. Brought 'em from de fort."

"You're a trump, Injun. I might 'a' knowed you had'n't forgot to git the tools as are necessary for this performance. But we don't want to stand hyur all night, and give them damned pale faces a chance to come onto us. Push forward!"

But the Wyandotte hesitated.

"Kidd stay here," he said. "Wapawah go forward alone; Wapawah put de guard out de way; den Kidd come."

"All right, kumrid," returned the ranger, with a chuckle, "ef yer wants to assist that red-skin to kick the basket. I won't object, but hyur's what 'd like to relieve you of the job."

The Wyandotte, however, seemed unwilling to let him do

so, for, without another word, he glided away, leaving Kidd standing there alone. The light was only a few paces distant, and he had to approach it with extreme care. He could see the savage guard walking slowly backward and forward in front of the cave, and judged, from his appearance, that he was a formidable enemy to contend with. But this aspect did not hold him back. Like a hungry beast creeping upon its intended prey, he gradually neared the unsuspecting guard. He drew his knife; he felt its point, and ran his thumb along its edge, to satisfy himself that it was sharp enough for the purpose in view. Then he clutched it firmly in his right hand, and crept a little nearer. The darky he perceived his solitary beat with the easy, dignified step peculiar to his race. Wapiwah watched him as a cat watches a mouse. He soon found that he could approach no nearer without exposing himself, so he hid himself behind a tree near one end of the fellow's beat, and lay in wait for his victim. In a moment the latter came slowly toward him. The light from the invisible fire revealed an ugly, ferocious-looking wretch, but one whose countenance betrayed no suspicion of the presence of enemies. Wapiwah crouched, and gathered his strength for the spring; and when the savage came within two or three feet of him, and was about to turn, he leaped from his covert with the quickness of lightning, and threw himself upon the startled Miami. With his left hand he seized his enemy by the throat, to prevent him from giving the alarm, while with his right he plunged his knife to the hilt in the helpless man's breast. This he repeated three times in quick succession, and when the lifeless body dropped like a log to the ground, he retained his hold upon his throat, and went down with it. When he rose to his feet, there was a dripping scalp at his girdle, and the empty cave of the dead Miami told whence it came.

It was all done in an incredible short space of time. Tossing his knife in his belt, he laid hold of the corpse and dragged it into some bushes nearby, and then, springing back, he went to walk up and down through the light, just as the ill-fated guard had done. He gave vent to a soft, sullen whistle, and Kirby Kidd came for war! He smiled significantly as he joined his red friend.

"Whar's the red-skin?" he asked.

"He gone away," was the brief reply.

"Gone to the happy huntin'-ground, I take it," said the scout, looking at the fresh scalp at his companion's waist. "Thar' ain't a blasted Miami in existence that's a match for you, old chap."

"No time to talk," said the Wyandotte, hurriedly. "Heard dis on de hill—s'pect pale-faces foller us."

"Give the word, then, as quick as yer please," said Kidd, leaning toward the mouth of the cave, which was a large aperture in the base of the hill, something in the shape of an architectural doorway. Just inside a fire was crackling cheerfully on the stone floor, lighting up a small portion of the wide, straight passage that ran back an indefinite distance through the hill.

"You go in dere," continued the Wyandotte, pointing toward the fire, and speaking hastily. "Go in cave—turn to de left t'rough door—find 'se'f in little room. Dere find pale-face captive all 'lone. Set him free—bring him out. Here; take tools—unfasten chains," he added, passing the satchel to the old scout.

"You mean as how I'm to go in and set the old fellow at liberty," observed Kidd, accepting the tools.

"Yes," was the quick reply. "Kidd talk to white man better'n Wapawah. Me stay here—keep look-out for enemy—Miami see me, t'ink I Miami, too. Let my brother bring captive out quick."

The ranger understood why the Indian wanted him to go in, and did not hesitate.

Turning away from his friend, he stepped fearlessly into the dark, subterranean passage, to execute the task assigned to him. He passed the fire in the entrance, and moved on toward the impenetrable darkness that lay at the farther end of the cave, like a shipless vessel billowing him toward death. He had proceeded but a few paces when he suddenly perceived several tiny rays of light, penetrating the dark recesses, and he saw that as his path directly in front of him, the golden bars obstructing his way. He looked at them curiously, and followed them to their source with his eyes. He went up close to the wall, and saw that they came from small

crevices there visible. A closer scrutiny showed him there was a door there—a rude, wooden door, filling a natural opening in the rocky wall, and evidently leading into another compartment. This discovery did not surprise him. He understood at once that the door opened into the cell in which the arrow-maker was confined.

Kirby Kidd placed his eyes to one of the crevices, and looked through. He drew back with quite a pleased expression of countenance, glancing toward the mouth of the cave to see that all was right in that direction. Then he felt carefully about him. His hand touched a huge latch. He raised it, pushed open the door, glided through, and stood in the presence of the man he was there to release.

CHAPTER XI.

FREED FROM THE FETTERS.

THE ranger had no sooner crossed the threshold of the room, than he paused with his hand on the open door. He found himself in a small, square chamber, lighted by torches, but gloomy and dreary-looking for all that. The rough walls were hung with a few old hides, a dozen or more quivers, and several large bundles of arrows, while a number of useless articles, and utensils of various kinds, were scattered about on the ground.

These things, however, were not the first observed.

Sitting on a rude bench, near the opposite wall, was a man—the very man, beyond a doubt, who was to be rescued. He was powerfully built, broad shouldered and massive, and, as well as could be judged from his appearance in a sitting posture, was still well active, notwithstanding he was no longer a young man. His hair and beard were hoar, and of a light brown color, thickened with silver. His face was slightly wrinkled, but evidently more from care than age, while his gray eyes, in which the fire of youth was not

entirely consumed, wore an expression of settled melancholy, which harmonized well with the look of constant pain that contracted his brows. He sat on one end of the bench—the rest of it was occupied by a number of unique tools, bunches of feathers, and a pile of straight, slender lath-sticks, made into the shape of arrows. He was at present occupied in putting flint heads on these shafts, and at the same time splinting the largest ends, preparatory to fastening on the feathers. The workman's feet were manacled with heavy chains, so that it seemed impossible for him to escape, even if no guard were stationed at the mouth of the cavern.

As Kirby Kild pushed open the heavy wooden door, and prised it, with his finger to his lips, just within the confines of the room, the man raised his head and stared at the intruder with undisguised amazement. Observing that he was a white man, like himself, he suffered every thing he held in his hands to fall unheeded to the ground, and undoubtedly would have given utterance to an exclamation of surprise but for that mute injunction of silence.

“Who are you?”

The words, uttered in a low, husky tone, seemed forced from the captive by his overwhelming astonishment.

“No matter—I’m a friend,” replied the scout, hastily, as he glanced back through the open doorway.

The prisoner’s face lighted up with a gleam of joy.

“And yet you are a stranger,” he said, half-doubtfully.

His hands were clasped tightly, now, and he gazed at the scout with almost childish eagerness, his breath coming in quick, irregular gasps.

“Never see’d you afore in my life,” exclaimed the scout; “but that’s neither hyur nor thar. A stranger he may be, after all. Neel’n’t open yer mouth; can’t waste time on yer lawyer; know ’zactly what I’m talkin’ about. My brother’s Kirby Kild, and I reckon thar ain’t a man on this side of thar’s an older head at I-jan fightin’ and outwittin’ than I. Yer knows Wapewin, the Wyandotte?”

“I have heard of him. He is the prisoner you’ve freed?”

“I should say he war. At present Wapewin’s in the employ of the commandant of Crump’s Station.”

“Indeed!”

"Sire's shootin'. And at this moment he stands jist outside the cave, waitin' fur me to bring you out."

Kild had approached the arrow-maker, and was standing in front of him as he uttered these last words. The old man raised his arm and looked up into his face.

"You are here, then, to release me from this vile captivity and bondage? You have come to take me home to my darling child? Oh, say that you have!"

"That's jist what we've done, ef your name's Richard Sedgewick."

"That is my name. I once lived at Cramper's Station many miles from here, where, I presume, my daughter still lives, if Heaven has spared her for so long a time. She can not know that I am alive. I have been here for more than a year, and yours is the first white face I have seen during my imprisonment. God grant that I may see my child once more on earth!"

For a moment it seemed that the strong man won't be overpowered by his emotion, but, taking notice of this, Kild told him he must not give way as he valued his freedom.

"You've got to be cool, old chap—cool as a cucumber. If you can't be cool, the jig's up, that's all. Yer daughter ain't dead, and I makes no doubt you'll see her 'fore many days; so keep up yer spirits, and don't git excited."

As the ranger spoke, he emptied the satchel of tools, dropped upon his knees and began to work industriously at the prisoner's chains.

"How can I ever repay you for this?" murmured Mr. Sedgewick, as he watched the bold ranger at his work.

"You're talkin' to the wrong beaver now, old feller," returned Kild, shaking his head. "This expedition war brain'd by a friend of your'n, named Herbert Thurston. He's a cuss but a s'picion you warn't dead, and at last he set out after you, with Wapawah. I fell in with 'em last night, and freed 'em. The young feller, and another chap called Tony Crane, are over yonder on a' island, waitin' fur me and the Injun."

"God bless Herbert Thurston!" exclaimed Mr. Sedgewick, in a trembling voice. "He is a noble youth, and fearless as he is noble. God bless him! But you, sir—you are pla-

cing your lives in the most imminent danger by coming here."

"You mean me and the Injun? Lord forgive you, stranger, we wouldn't feel nat'ral ef we warn't in danger."

"But there was a guard at the entrance."

"Thar's one thar' now—Wapawah."

"A Miami was there before you came in."

"Jist so; but the poor cuss got sleepy, and we relieved him. Wapawah helped him to remove his wig, and put him to bed. Thar, the job's did. Richard Sedgewick, stand up."

As the ranger ceased speaking he discontinued his work, and the heavy chains fell rattling to the ground. Mr. Sedgewick started at the sound, rose to his feet with a bewildered sort of an air, and gazed about him almost breathlessly. His limbs were free.

"It is too good to be true," he faltered.

"Mold me into buck-shot! I hope you didn't think you was goin' to stay in this blasted hole forever, leavin' yer child to wear her young life away mournin' fer you?"

"Oh, I will see her again—I will! I will!"

"Wal, thar' ain't no use laughin' 'fore you're out of the woods," said the scout. "Thar's a heap of risk in this."

The released prisoner turned upon his brave deliverer a look of terrible determination. His eyes glared, his hand closed tightly, and he straightened his powerful frame, as if nerving himself for a fearful struggle.

"My friend," said he, "you have filled me with bright anticipations, and now, rather than return to the hopeless captivity and servitude I have so long endured, I will die defending my liberty."

"Hist! what's that?" cried the scout, all of a sudden.

"Mold me into buck-shot, the j-g's up, warr as elected!"

At that instant there was a commotion outside—a sound of scuffling feet in the mouth of the cave! Then there was a loud exclamation, a horse snort and a furious oath. The two men exchanged glances, and stood like statues at bay. The noises ceased almost instantly, but following close upon them came another sound—that of quick footsteps coming along the passage outside!

Somebody, friend or foe, was rapidly approaching.

CHAPTER XII.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS.

"HYER, stranger, take this, quick! I calc'late you'll find it in the twinklin' of a cat's eye! Them footstep ain't Wapawah's."

The scout slipped a knife into the hand of the old Arrow-maker, who clutched it firmly, and drew up his massive figure with an air that showed he would fight to the last. He drew in his lips till every vestige of blood was driven out of them, planted one foot behind the other, and stood prepared for the desperate encounter that seemed at this moment inevitable. His eyes flashed as they had not flashed for many a day, and altogether he looked like a man who would sell his life dearly, and his freedom not at all.

The two men had no sooner thrown themselves on the defensive, at the sound of the coming footsteps, than a figure darted into view, and came bounding into the room without the least ceremony.

The figure was obviously possessed of wonderful agility, though of gigantic height, and a perfect Hercules in muscular development. A glance showed that the intruder was a white man. In other words, it was Dick Hamilton. The villain passed in front of the two men, and drew back toward the door. His hat was gone, and the dark hair, streaming unrestrained over his distorted face, gave him a look of devilish ferocity. His eyes fairly blazed. He glared at the ranger and his companion with a gleam of malicious triumph.

In his hand he held a pistol. Quick as lightning he leveled it at Richard Selzwick, and fired!

"Take that, curse you!" he roared, "and if Herbert Thomson marries your daughter it will not be with her father's consent. Ha! ha! ha!"

Had not the smoke dimmed his vision, it is not at all likely he would have uttered those words, for the bullet flew harmlessly past the old man, and flattened against the wall behind him.

Then there was the noise of more commotion. Another figure bounded into the room—there was the sound of a heavy blow, as dealt with a brawny fist—a clattering sheet—a roar of blind fury—a metallic ring, as of a pistol being tossed to the ground—and then rose the sounds of a furious struggle.

The smoke lifted, and then two men were seen, locked in close embrace, whirling round and round, and rolling backward and forward across the room.

One of them was Dick Hamilton—the other, Wapiwah the Wyandotte.

It seemed a struggle of life and death, and it was evident that Wapiwah—despite the great strength of his adversary—would be the victor. As they went staggering from one side of the room to the other, the Indian caught a glimpse of Kirby Kidd and the arrow-maker. His dark face brightened as he saw that both were alive.

"Fly! fly!" he shouted, vehemently. "Go quick! Wapiwah follow soon. Don't stop! Hush! Mamma's coming!"

This brought Kidd to his senses. At any other time he would have stopped to assist the Wyandotte, but as he had promised to follow the directions of the latter on this occasion, he saw there was nothing left for him to do but to look to the safety of himself and his charge.

Seizing the old man by the arm, he dragged him, rather than led him, toward the door.

"Come on, stranger," he said; "there's no time for preliminaries. Reckon you ain't used to walkin', but there's got to be a sight of it did now. We must cut sticks pretty lively if we git out of this place 'fore the reds git in. Hello!"

They had just reached the door when they were met by Cyprian Quiggs, who, coming at full speed, was about to dash pell-mell into the room. Finding his way barred by the two men coming out, he paused suddenly and leaped backward. With a quick sweep of his hand, he tossed back the long gray hair that had fallen over his eyes, and gazed sharply at the two men confronting him. In an instant he had recognized them. With a shriek of rage he drew a knife and sprang forward, making a lightning-like slash at Richard's back. But the blow was not well aimed, and inflicted no other injury than a

shot a scratch on his would-be victim's arm. Before the act could be repeated Kirby Kild clenched his heavy fist, and dealt the dwarf a blow between the eyes that sent him spinning back into the passage, where he fell in a heap!

"That!" exclaimed the scout, "I's laid out for a minute or two at least. Come on now, while the road's clear."

Hand in hand they leaped out of the chamber. But no sooner had they done so than they paused again. For a moment they stood with their faces turned toward the mouth of the cave, neither advancing nor retreating. No wonder. By the light of the fire in the entrance, which dispelled the gloom for quite a distance around, they saw a score of shadowy forms softly approaching! They stood for an instant, as if frozen to the spot. Escape by the mouth of the cavern was impossible. *In a few minutes the cave would be swarming with red-skins!*

"No use goin' any farther," said Kild, in a low, calm voice. "There's no help for it, old man, and I'm sorry we've made such a lousy job of our attempt to set you free. Stand firm, and I'll fight for you to the last. You shan't go under till I do."

"Here—come this way—quick! Don't speak a word, nor waste a second of time, but come with me!"

It was Richard Selkewick who spoke. Hurriclly, almost silently, he seized the ranger, jerked him backward and literally dragged him along the passage!

"Hold on! What's the matter?" cried the ranger, partially recovering his equilibrium.

"Don't make a noise," cautioned the other, "but follow me—quick! for your life! There is a hole at the other end of the cave, by which we may make our exit!"

Those words were not lost upon the scout. He knew he would have imperiled his life to free them, for they told that escape was still possible. What other way could he find? He could not go back, even if, luckily, he had known the back side of the chamber—no, he must follow the scout. They could hear the heavy yelping of the dogs as they padded into the cave behind them. They could only crawl to avoid their speech, but to make as little noise as possible, they ran on tip-toe. The darkness soothed them as they advanced, until they could not see an inch before them. It seemed a miracle that

they ran against nothing, but Mr. Selgewick was evidently acquainted with the course he was pursuing, and if Kirby Kidd had any unpleasant thoughts of collisions, the undeviating speed of his companion brought him to the conclusion that the latter knew what he was doing.

"I'm blowed ef this don't run back a pretty good way," muttered Kidd, beginning to wonder if it had an end.

"It's much farther, replied the Arrow-maker.

"Yer seems to know this place by heart."

"I've lived here long enough. I never knew, however, that there was an orifice in this end of the cave until I made an attempt to escape in this direction."

"Tried to escape?"

"Yes; several months ago."

"Didn't succeed?"

"I had no sooner reached the open air than I was seized by the heathens, and dragged back to my chains, with the understanding that nothing but my life would pay the penalty of another such offense. So, you see it doesn't matter much whether I die fighting to-night, or allow myself to be retaken, though if one or the other were inevitable I should choose the former. Listen! those wretches have discovered my absence. What a din they are creating! In ten minutes a hundred of them will be searching for me in the neighboring woods."

"If they take the Indian's scalp I'd never forgive myself," growled the scout, glancing back anxiously.

"I am confident he will turn up all right," returned his companion. "At any rate we are powerless to help him now. He will—"

The speaker suddenly came to a dead halt, and the sentence he had begun was never finished.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed.

"Where?"

"At the end of the passage."

"I see no hole."

"It's above you, and entirely invisible from below. There's a sort of natural rocky stair-way leading to the opening, somewhat difficult of ascent, but I know, from experience, that it can be climbed. Follow me, and be careful in choosing your foot-holds."

"Lead on. I'm right at yer heels."

Mr. Sedgewick sprang upward, and began to clamber up a steep, rocky ascent, closely followed by the scout.

This almost perpendicular passage was longer than the hunter had anticipated, and quite difficult to climb, the intense darkness rendering their eyes useless, and leaving the only resource of feeling for places on which to set their feet. A single misstep would have sent them tumbling to the bottom. Their progress was painfully slow, and the rescued prisoner was well justified in fearing that they would find their retreat cut off by enemies when they reached the top.

At length, however, Kirby Kidd felt his hand grasped by that of his companion, and he was drawn out of the deep hole into the pure air above ground.

In another moment the fugitives stood side by side on a slight rising, with the whole earth beneath them. The first thing they did was to cast a piercing glance about them. No enemies were in sight. The night was not yet far advanced, and there was still no moon to drive away the darkness, which the stars only slightly relieved. This fact, however, was looked as a blessing, for, as the scout asserted, the greater the darkness the greater their chance of escape. Wild shouts and yells came up from the valley, and in a few minutes, beyond a doubt, they would be heard in the woods around them.

"Come on, stranger," said Kidd, hurriedly. "We're cuttin' our own noses off by standin' byar. I'll take the lead now."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONFUSION IN THE CAVE.

DICK HAMILTON and Crispin Quigles had followed the two scouts, Kirby Kidd and the Indian, in order to find the place where Richard Sedgewick was incarcerated, and frustrate the plans invented for that gentleman's rescue. When the scouts descended the hill to the long strip of timber in the valley

below, these precious rascals were not far behind, dogging their footsteps with cat-like stealth. Down the long declivity they crept, carefully and determinedly, sliding from tree to tree as noiselessly as phantoms, Quiggs taking the lead, with his practiced eyes gleaming like coals of fire beneath their shaggy brows. When Wapawash went forward alone, for the purpose of removing the Mingo guard, as we have seen, the two villains paused to watch their movements. Both were very much in favor of slipping forward and killing Kilty Kidd as he stood there alone, but both were, also, very much afraid to take upon themselves the perpetration of such a deed, as it would be very dangerous to them. Hamilton thought Quiggs ought to do it, since he was hired to prevent the liberation of the captive; and Quiggs declared he should not hesitate a second if he were as big and strong as Hamilton. This abashed the young man, whose greatest ambition was to appear brave in the eyes of other people, and he was about screwing up his courage to the sticking place when there came a signal from Wapawash, and the old scout stole rapidly away in answer to it.

So that game was ended before it was fairly begun. Nevertheless they were still perisitive, and they stole cautiously forward in the tracks of the two companions, both judging from the stream of light in front that they were approaching a cave. Safely concealed near by, they saw the women soon enter the cave, while the Indian began to pick up and pile up in front, as if determined to keep off any enemy that should attempt to interfere with his companion's work. Now was held another consultation between Quiggs and Hamilton, both of whom thought it quite necessary to clear the way between them and the interior of the cave, and the only way to do this was to slip up behind the Wyandotte and catch his guard asleep as quietly as possible. But, as before, a dispute soon arose as to who should perform this most important duty, both of them being more afraid of Wapawash than they were of Kidd. Hamilton swore it was not his place, Quiggs said it would be madness for a man of his size to attack the big, red-skinned savage without help. Hamilton got angry, and said Quiggs would either do it or go without the deed. With a sneer at Hamilton's evident cowardice, Quiggs then turned away and

said if that were the case he would do well to retrace his steps homeward immediately. Hamilton thought of Herbert Thompson and Vennie Sedgewick, and eagerly detained the dwarf, occupying his time on the instant. He agreed to take command of the defence of attacking their enemy, provided, if such assistance was needed, his confederate would not be slow in joining the affray.

"Do you dare to die?" he demanded.

"In such a case I have no objections whatever," replied the dwarf.

"And you will not hang back if I am overpowered?"

"In such a case I will render you all the assistance I can; but you surely haven't much faith in your own strength and agility if you think that red-skin is capable of overpowering you. Don't stop to talk, however. That white hunter has had time enough to release the captive and bring him out, while we have been jabbering here. Be quick, man. Maybe we'll make their exit from the cave by some other opening than the mouth."

This thought had not struck Hamilton, and the very possibility of such a thing almost drove him wild. He did not hesitate another instant, but snatching a pistol from his belt, darted out of his hiding-place like a shot, and glided swiftly toward the Indian, who at that moment chanced to be standing with his back toward him.

But instantly, knowing Wapawth as well as did Dick Hamilton, ought to have known that he was never to be caught unawares. The wily savage knew the villainous plot, and was concealed nearby, though he had not shown that he even suspected such a thing.

He waited quietly until the man had approached within a few feet of him. Then, with the quickness of lightning, he turned upon him, snatched his rifle, and darted forward, striking the man with his fist. With a scream of pain and surprise, the latter recoiled, and Hamilton, in a moment, was upon him, and with a fierce impression and pointed his pistol at the Indian's head. But the latter was not to be frightened by this act. With a sudden movement he dashed the weapon to the ground before it could be discharged, and

then drew back, waiting for his adversary to rise. It is impossible to tell how the affair would have ended, had not Crispin Quiggs seen that the assistance promised by him would, at this point, come in good play. The little man leaped forward like a rubber ball, with no weapon in his hands, but with a look in his gleaming eyes that showed his design was deadly. Before his swift approach could be checked, or his intention divined, he gave a yell and leaped upon Wapawash's back! With both hands he clutched the Indian's neck in a vice-like gripe, and began to choke him to death! Wapawash whirled round and round, and tried hard to shake him off, but every effort to dislodge the little wretch was fruitless. Perched upon his victim's back, he clung as tenaciously as a panther, his long, bony fingers slowly doing the work of destruction.

Before this struggle could come to a fatal termination, however, Dick Hamilton recovered his pistol and sprang to his feet.

He took in all at a glance, and saw that he could not slay his enemy without endangering the life of his friend. So, feeling it incumbent on himself to do something, he struck the savage on the head with the butt end of his pistol. The blow was a tremendous one, and Wapawash was stunned. He toppled forward and fell sprawling on his face. The missile proved a lucky one for him, for the fall broke the gripe on his throat, and sent the dwarf rolling several yards away.

Dick Hamilton did not pause to note the effect of his impudent act, but dashed into the cavern, leaped over the fire in the entrance, and was out of sight in a twinkling.

Luckily, Wapawash was only stunned for the brief space of a moment. As soon as he touched the ground his senses returned, and he gathered himself up with all possible speed. Quiggs did the same. Observing that his opponent was bent to combat with, the Indian drew his tomahawk and hurled it at him with an unerring hand. But Quiggs was no less active than his antagonist. With a movement as swift as lightning he dodged aside, and the tomahawk flew harmlessly by, burying its edge in the tree behind him.

At that instant a series of savage yells rose on the still night air coming from the village. A score of throats took

up the cry, and it was at once apparent that the noise of the commotion in the vicinity of the cave had reached the ears of the Indians!

Wapawah did not wait for further proof of this. Wheeling round, he bounded into the cave like a hunted deer. Just as he did so, the report of Hamilton's pistol rung out clear and loud from the chamber within.

Crispin Quings was left alone outside. For a few painful seconds he was undecided how to act. Silent and irresolute, he paced hurriedly about, as if contemplating flight. But it occurred to him that, if he should take to his heels and was caught before he could make good his escape, he would be put to death for treachery, of which that very act would condemn him. On the other hand, supposing he should stand his ground, it was more than probable he would still receive the penalty of treachery, unless he could invent a story that would satisfactorily explain his presence there at that particular point of time.

He had little time to decide. All at once a new idea took possession of him. He brightened up, and determined to act upon it, whatever might be the result.

He stood perfectly motionless until the foremost of the coming savages were near enough to see him, as he stood in the light of the fire. Then, whipping out his knife, he turned toward them and shouted, in the Miami tongue:

"Come on! There are pale-faces here!"

With that, he gave the glittering steel a flourish in the air, and sprang into the cavern, as if leading the way for his red friends.

How he was met by the heavy fist of Kirty Kill, as he attempted to enter the prison-chamber, we have already seen.

We left Dick Hamilton and Wapawah struggling desperately in each other's arms, in the arrow-maker's apartment. Their contest was of short duration, however, nor was it carried to a tragical termination. When he saw that his friends were cut and gone, the Indian had no desire to learn his opponent, and when they heard the savages coming they parted as of one accord. Dick Hamilton ran to the door and came back again, pale as death. He had a perfect horror of falling

into the hands of the Indians, and he saw that escape, by the mouth of the cave, was absolutely impossible. With wild with fear, he began to run round the room in search of another opening. Strange to say, he found it. In one corner he caught a deep, dark recess, and snugly concealed himself in its furthest corner, where he lay trembling and silent, listening to the noise in the room without, and praying that his hiding-place would not be discovered.

Wapawah made no attempt to hide from his enemies. As soon as his arms were free he began to rub a portion of the paint from his face and breast, which, if left on, would have shown that he was a Wyandotte. When this was done, he placed himself near the door, with his back toward it, and waited for the savages to enter. As they came rushing in, he dextrously thrust himself among them, and instantly became one of the yelling crowd without attracting attention.

Hamilton saw this, and began to tremble more violently than before. He feared the Wyandotte would cause him to be dragged out of the niche. But he need have felt no uneasiness on that score, for Wapawah had no desire to offer him the least injury, now that Kirby Kild had escaped with the captive. To the mean, unprincipled wretch, quaking in his narrow lurking place, the Indian's forbearance to take advantage of the man with whom he had been fighting for his life, was something he could not understand.

Crispin Quiggs had gathered himself up by the time the savages arrived on the spot. The blow from the report's shot had been a stunning one, and he had found himself unable to rise immediately.

In answer to the many suspicious inquiries put to him by his dusky friends—who had kept the secret of the white captive even from him—Quiggs replied that he would soon proceed toward the village when a loud report was heard from him in the direction of the cave. This proved satisfactory.

He was as glad to find that Hamilton was not in the place as he was angry when he discovered that the prisoners and his rescuers were also gone. How they had escaped he could not imagine, but gone they were. He did not recognize Wapawah—probably did not see him, for the Indian was sly enough to keep out of his way.

Watching his chance, the dwarf slipped out of the crowd when no one was watching him, and stole away to look for his missing companion.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DWARF'S PLOT.

As may be supposed, the rage of the savages knew no bounds when they entered the prison-chamber and found the prisoner gone. They looked at the chains with which his feet had been fettered, and saw that they had been removed by tools well fitted for the purpose. In fact, it became plain to them instantly that some daring friend of the captive had spirited him away under cover of the darkness, and that nothing was left for them to do but to give chase.

As if the thought had struck all of them at once, they gave a yell in concert, and began to pour out of the cave in a body. The news of the white slave's disappearance was carried to the head chiefs of the village, and it spread with the rapidity of lightning, till every Indian in the valley, old and young, knew that the old arrow-maker had taken French leave. Large numbers of warriors were sent out in every direction, to scour the country far and near, nor return until the runaway was recaptured.

Now, when all this was done, did any one think of the guard, who had been stationed at the mouth of the cave just at midnight? Then he came to the minds of some, and was remembered by others. The fellow was missing. During the excitement of the last hour he had not been seen, nor thought of.

Supposing he had been killed by the captive's champion, a small party went to look for his body.

And they found it. Lying in a clump of bushes, where the slayer had evidently taken the precaution to conceal it, they found the body of their brother. He had been killed by a knife but, worse than that, he had been stripped

of every inch of the clothing he had worn before his death. He was stark naked. Not a vestige of any garment was left to protect the stiffening corpse; and even the glittering adornments, worn with such pride in life, had all been carried away. Whoever their unknown enemy was, they thought he must be a very covetous man, to rob his victim of his clothing, poor and scanty as it was; and the howls of lamentation that went up from their savage breasts were mingled with vociferous vows of vengeance.

Dick Hamilton, crouching in the furthest corner of the niche in the wall, trembling and breathless lest he should be discovered and dragged out among the infuriated henchmen, was almost beside himself with joy when the noisy crowd poured tumultuously out of the chamber, leaving it entirely vacant. Finding the coast clear, he tarried no longer in his unpleasant quarters, but crept out and stole to the door. Cautiously he thrust his head out, and ran his eye up and down the passage. The Indians had really deserted the cave. The watch-fire in the entrance had sunk to a mere bed of coals, thereby giving him a much better chance of escaping unseen, and he determined to make the attempt without delay. He knew it was a hazardous undertaking, since he ran the risk of throwing himself into the hands of a lot of murderous wretches, whichever direction he should take, and in such a case he would undoubtedly be set upon and literally torn to pieces, as the person who had set the captives free. But he deemed it better to run this risk than to remain in his present hiding place, for he could not tell at what moment the Indians would return and search every part of the cavern thoroughly.

Mustering up what little courage the occasion allowed him, he moved softly along the passage toward the opening. He passed the smoldering fire, and stood a moment in the entrance. Nothing of a suspicious nature was seen or heard in the immediate vicinity, and he deemed it advisable to venture forth at once.

He stepped out, paused, cast a hurried glance around, and then ran swiftly along the base of the hill, toward the point where he and the dwarf entered the valley.

Upon reaching this point he began to ascend the hill, rap

idly and at a risk of betraying himself by sending a shower of loose stones to the bottom. But, fortunately for him, no such accident befell him. Once or twice he heard foot-steps not far away, as of some one ascending or descending the hill, but on such occasions he stopped and buzzed the ground till the sound died away, when he would resume his course with caution.

He reached the summit of the ridge, and was moving on when he was startled by a rustling in the bushes near by.

He paused suddenly, and fairly held his breath.

The next instant a hand was laid roughly on his arm, and he was drawn rapidly along through the darkness, while a familiar cracking voice cried, almost in a whisper:

"Come on, man! Don't let the grass grow under your feet. There are red-skins all around us!"

The speaker was Crispin Quiggs.

"Red-skins!" repeated Hamilton, running along beside his little friend. "How do you know?"

"How do I know?" was the impatient rejoinder. "Have I not seen and heard them? The captive and his champions have effected their escape, and the Indians are hunting their trail with lights. Bless you, man, the forest swarms with them!"

"Where are you going?"

"Anywhere, to get out of the way of these rascals. Not that I care for myself, since I have nothing to fear from them, but you know it won't do to let them discover you."

"Very true. But must we give up all thought of preventing the return of my uncle?—for he is my uncle, Quiggs. I saw him, and shot at him."

"For the present, ye," replied Quiggs. "I have already hid my plans. I will disclose them to you at once, and then—"

"Good heavens!" cried Hamilton, suddenly.

Both started back, and unconsciously grasped each other's arm. A loud, crazing, blood-chilling yell—one of those regular Indian war-whoops, which, when once heard, can never be forgotten—echoed and re-echoed through the forest aisles, such as might be supposed to express the triumph of a score of demons.

"What does that mean?" asked Hamilton, breathlessly.

"It means they have found the trail," whispered the dwarf.

"What trail?"

"Why that of your uncle and the scouts."

"Good! I hope they'll catch them."

"Maybe you'll be the first one caught."

"Not unless you betray me, I think—"

"'Sh! Look!"

Something bright flashed out in the darkness before their eyes, and attracted their attention.

They looked, and a short distance away through the trees, beheld three Indians moving slowly along. They were all stooping as they walked, and one of them carried a tiny light, by the aid of which they seemed intently scanning the ground. Every yard or two they would stop, bend lower, move the light about as if searching for something, and then glide on as before, all seemingly so wrapped up in their work as to notice nothing else.

"They are the ones who gave the war-whoop," whispered the dwarf. "They are on the trail, and have signaled to the others. Listen!"

Yell upon yell was now heard, near and far, and the three trailers were scarcely out of sight when a tramp of many feet was heard in the woods on every side. The two whites sank to the ground, and hugged it as closely as possible, the taller one shaking with terror as the fearful sounds burst upon his ear. The footsteps increased—the crackling of brush-wood grew louder—the whoops seemed frightfully near—and several times the crouching whites saw shadowy figures almost within reach. At one time they thought it was all up with them. A big, athletic warrior came bounding down at the top of his speed, stumbled over Hamilton, and plunged headlong into the bushes. As luck would have it, however, he gathered himself up and ran on, without suspecting the true cause of his fall.

"I rather guess Wapawah will lose this game," said the dwarf, as soon as he could venture to speak. "They can't be far away, and if these red-skins don't catch them before they reach Crumper's Station, it will be a miracle."

"Suppose the Indians should get on our trail?" said Hamilton.

"No danger of that, now; there was, before they found the other trail, but ours is likely to remain undiscovered now."

"What shall we do?"

"Stay here for a while."

"And then?"

"I will tell you. I suppose you are aware that there was an Indian guard in front of the cave when Wapawah and the hunter approached it?"

"Certainly."

"And that Wapawah killed him?"

"Yes."

"Hanging his body in some bushes?"

"Exactly."

"Well, here is the fellow's clothing."

George produced a small bundle, and placed it into the hands of his astonished companion.

"Take these," he said; "you will need them if you follow my directions. While the Miamis were in the cave, I slipped out and robbed the dead Indian of all his clothing and ornaments, having formed my plans in a moment. I want you to remove your own clothes, put these on, stain your face with some dirt, and go at once to George's Station!"

"WHAT?"

"Don't interrupt me; I know what I'm talking about. We can do nothing further to prevent the escape of your uncle, without exposing ourselves to the Indians. Although his chances at present seem few and slim, you know there isn't a more cunning man in the country than the Wyandott, and he may overwit his enemies after all. In that case you will be well returned home with his life, consent to the marriage of his daughter and young Thurston, and you will be cleared of your own guilt. Now, if you will disguise your person as an Indian, go straight to George's, watch your chance and steal Virginia's silver away from her home, you will find it in your power whether the father is saved or not."

The disclosure of the crafty little villain's plan threw Ham-

ilton into a fit of musing. It was a daring game, and he doubted if he possessed courage and cunning enough to carry it through.

"Suppose, after this is done, her father should be killed or recaptured?" he asked.

"Then," replied the dwarf, quietly, "you can leave the girl for a few minutes in the woods, return to her in your own guise, play the part of rescuer and take her home."

"And if her father returns home in safety?"

"Even then you will do well to play the part of rescuer, refusing to take her home, however, until she promises to become your wife. Offer no objections to my plan, for I can parry them all. Besides, we have no time for argument. Come! we are in danger as long as we sit here. I will go a mile or two with you, and then return."

The word "danger" was sufficient to put Dick Hamilton in motion, so he was on his feet almost as soon as it was said, and off like a shot with his little friend.

CHAPTER XV.

WAITING FOR WAPAWAIL

HERBERT THURSTON and Tony Crane, waiting on the island above, were not a little alarmed for the safety of their friends when the great hubbub in the Indian village was borne to their ears. It told them that Wapawail and Hamilton failed to rescue the captive without attracting the attention of the savages, and to them it was a matter of great uncertainty, whether the savages had captured and put the prisoners and were pursuing, or whether they had been discovered in the very act of releasing him, and captured—or, possibly, killed? Tony's opinion leaned toward the latter possibility, and Tony's motion was, to take the nearest canoe and sail down the river with all the speed they could command. Not that he was afraid—preposterous!—but he confessed to a weakness he had discovered in Vinnie Selgowie's, and he

could not bear to think of her going down to the grave with a broken heart because of his death!

Herbert would not listen.

"I will not move a step until I know the whole truth," he said, grimly. "I led them into this difficulty, and I will share their fate. You can go if you like, only you must not take the canoe. But I believe the scows are still free—though closely pursued—for the noise comes nearer every moment, and sounds very like a chase."

When the tumult broke out, Herbert and Tony were sitting on a fallen tree in the center of the island. Now they stood on the strand, close to the water's edge, straining their eyes through the intervening gloom, in the hope of catching sight of their friends on the opposite shore. Tony trembled with fear—Herbert with suspense.

All at once they heard the soft dip of a paddle. Then a dark, shapeless shadow appeared, coming swiftly toward them across the water. Thurston brought his gun to his shoulder as quick as thought, and covered the shadow. A steady light raised the hammer, and a steady finger touched the trigger. But at that instant a whistle—very low, but very distinct—trembled through the air. The young man lowered his gun, and answered the signal joyfully. Tony heaved a deep sigh of relief, and muttered:

"It's *them*, dog my cats ef 'tain't! I reckon we'll sit for here now, and I'll be durned ef I ain't willin'! Oh, Vinnie, my darlin', I've been amply revenged on you, and may I be even for a nooance ef I ever leave you ag'in."

The next minute a canoe grated on the sand, and two men leaped nimbly ashore.

"Wal, hyar we are," said the cheerful voice of Kirby Ketchum. "Hyar we are, sure enow, but I'm blowed ef we ain't glad to get our best friends to get hyar ahead of the Indians. They're comin' like all the scoundrels in the world is comin', and I've a right to say I've come here to this island."

"Good Lord!" replied Tony; "this is awful. Wouldn't it be quite better—at least, wouldn't it be prudent—that is, hadn't we better turn tail on this confounded place, and git?"

"Sae hyur, kumrids," continued Kidd, without heeding Crane's interruption, "what you standin' ther' like umskells fur? Ain't you goin' to give this chap no sort of a greeting whatsoever?"

They had thought the ranger's companion was Wapewich until this moment. The words of their friend had the effect of surprising them exceedingly, and causing them to look more closely at the person accompanying him. Herbert started as the truth flashed upon him. He stopped for a moment, trembling violently, and scrutinized the man's face. Then, with a joyful exclamation, he seized the man's hand and shook it warmly, heartily, rapturously.

"Thank God! thank God! It is Richard Selgewick!"

"Yes, Herbert," replied the new comer, in a voice hoarse with emotion, "yes, Herbert, it is Richard Selgewick, and he joins with you in thanking God. Also, let me bestow the blessing on you, for your good friend here has told me all. Your thoughtfulness and noble-hearted bravery have been the preservation of my life—"

"Please don't," interposed the young man, stammering and blushing like a girl. "You will do me a favor if you won't mention that again. You praise me too highly. I may claim credit for thoughtfulness; nothing more. The bravery has all been with Wapewich, the Wyandotte, and this during sport. I am sure, sir, we all feel a thousand times repaid for what risks we have done, by the success of our enterprise. My greatest desire, at present, is to restore you to your daughter, who thinks you dead. Be happy! I feel as if nothing could ever make me unhappy again. Ha, ha, ha! I know I have been hoping again to meet you, and now that I find myself standing face to face with you, it seems to me as though I have been instrumental in raising the dead."

He paused, as he felt a tear falling on his hand, and bowed his forehead, "God bless you!" from his bosom's bottom.

"And this is Tony?" said the old man, in a moment later, as he shook that worthy warmly by the hand. "I am glad to meet you, Tony—very glad indeed to meet you."

Tony had already taken it for granted.

"Hain't Wapawah been hyur?" asked the ranger with some anxiety, laying his hand on Thurston's arm.

"Not since he went away with you," was the reply.

"He's among the Injuns, then, I reckon," said the ranger. "Hain't seed him since me and the captive left the valley."

"Shall we wait for him?"

"For a few minutes, I reckon, though I 'low 'tain't no use, for of anybody's able to take keer of hisself, the chief are. I'll wager my hat he's playin' Miami."

The shouts of the pursuing Indians had entirely ceased, and the same deathlike silence that had reigned previous to the rescue of the captive, now brooded over the country. From any thing that could be seen or heard one might conclude that the savages had given up the chase and returned to their lodges. Once, indeed, they saw a tiny light among the trees on the shore; but it was gone in an instant, and was not seen again. This lull in the storm was received with much favor by Tony Crane, who ventured an opinion that they might now begin their homeward journey without further fear of molestation. But Tony was lurching at, and for fear he had branded himself, in the eyes of his friends, as an incorrigible coward, he made haste to propose that they remain on the island until morning, as he was quite sleepy, and was not a bit afraid of Indians. Killd told him they must leave the island if possible, and that the Indians had by no means given up the pursuit.

Mr. Selgwick took Thurston by the arm, and drew him aside.

"Herbert," said he, "I want to speak a few words to you in private. Is my daughter Vinnie well?"

"She was in perfect health, I believe, when I left Crumpton's," answered the young man.

"She believes me dead?"

"And has for more than a year."

"Poor thing! Does she live with her uncle?"

"She does."

"I fear he doesn't treat her as he should. I have always deemed my brother-in-law a man of little principle. However, I hope I may take her from him before many days

By the way, Herbert, I once gave you permission to address Vinnie on the subject of—"

"I have never availed myself of the privilege so kindly granted me," said Herbert, dropping his eyes in confusion.

"Changed your mind, I presume?"

"Never, sir! I love your daughter just as I did when you were at home, and I can never love her less."

"And yet," said he, "if I may ask, have you not changed your opinion of your love?"

Herbert hesitated a moment, and then answered boldly:

"Mr. Hamilton seemed to guess that such was my intention."

Mr. Selgewick did not understand.

"What has Mr. Hamilton to do with this?" he inquired.

"Immediately after you were gone, sir, and reported back, your brother-in-law came to me one day, and addressed me by asserting that I was in love with his niece. He said that, as her friend and mine, he could not allow me to address her on the subject, although he was very sorry, etc. I asked him why? He then coldly informed me that Vinnie and his son, Dick, were engaged to be married."

"It's a lie! a base lie!" cried Mr. Selgewick, springing flying into a passion. "Vinnie never did love that fellow. She loved him, and I know she would never do that to ruin his life. It is only a scheme of Hamilton's to get me out of the country for good!" But, Herbert," he added, turning off his anger coolly again, "do you know you were followed from Canada's Station by Dick Hamilton and another person?"

"I am well aware of it."

"My nephew," he continued, "came running into the carriage just as this morn, KILL, and I was preparing to leave him. I recognized him—he was wild with rage—and he told me that he would make my escape unavailing, and that he would go to this man. I have not been able to communicate his address, and have not had an opportunity to speak to KILL about it. But it is all plain to me now. In the event of my resurrection, so to speak, the young woman was Vinnie taken from him by one whose life can not be prolonged; therefore, his object is to prevent my return home."

"That is the conclusion I have arrived at," said Herbert.

"but I cannot conceive how he found out the purport of our expedition, unless he heard me talking to Wapiwah—"

At this point the conversation was interrupted by a scream of terror from Tony Crane.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE ENEMY LESS.

Tony had been directed by Kidd to go to the other side of the island, and keep watch there until relieved. He had walked away in obedience to the injunction, but, in less than a minute after he had disappeared among the willow trees, he set up a cry that could have proceeded from nothing but fright, and came dashing back headlong to the spot where he had left his companions. Terrified half out of his wits, the poor fellow rushed blindly down the sandy slope, ran plump against Kirby Kidd and fell backward. He regained his feet with great nimbleness, and cast a series of hurried glances around him, with eyes as round and shining as a pair of moons.

"Mold me into buck shot!" ejaculated the scout, uncertain whether to be amused or alarmed. "What in the name of George Washington's shot-buckles has give you such a scare? Speak, blast you!"

Tony pointed toward the center of the island, and moved his lips. At first not a sound escaped them, but at length he managed to articulate, in a very weak voice:

"I was thar' amongst the willers. It's as dark thar' as—
—a sack of black cats. I was movin' along kinder slow
—, when I was as cold as ice struck by me."

"What's gone on there, Tony?" inquired Kirby.

"It's none of your kind, Kirby won't you!" protested Tony, with cutting teeth. "Whatever the dark thing was it passed right in front of me, and so close that I touched it. It was awful cold, like a — ghost!"

From this it was evident that he was more inclined to

believe the object a spirit from the dead than a mortal enemy.

"Did yer see it?" inquired the ranger.

"No, I think not—I reckon not—that is, I know I didn't, 'cause it's so fetched dark I couldn't see beyond the end of my nose."

Herbert laughed. Kidd chuckled, and said:

"I reckon the spook warn't any more'n the limb of a tree!"

"Gosh dang it! do you think I'm a fool! It had legs, 'cause I felt 'em as it passed, and besides that I heard its footsteps."

"Did, eh?"

"Lord, yes; and I heerd the bushes rattle as it run'd away. It made more noise nor a ginewine ghost, I s'pect, but dang my cats if it felt much like a human bein'. It didn't skeer me, though. I jest kin back to tell you 'bout it. *Good Lord! there 'tis now!*"

As he uttered this last exclamation, Tony jumped behind Mr. Selgewick, as if his own personal safety was his only thought.

They all turned their eyes in the direction he was looking. To their surprise they saw a dark, moving figure, which seemed to have just emerged from the willow grove, and which, as they looked, was running across the open space toward the water, as if it were intent upon plunging in and swimming away.

Their eyes had scarcely alighted upon this object, when there was a flash—a bang—and Kirby Kidd's rifle was empty. At the same instant there was a shriek of mortal agony—long, loud and unearthly—and then the little dark figure lay motionless on the sand.

"That settles his hash," observed the scout, as he coolly blew the smoke from his gun; "and I calculate he ain't no Injun, either."

They ran forward to look at the scout's victim, the scout always bringing up in the rear, looking his gun as he went.

"By heavens!" ejaculated Herbert, looking over his body.

"What's the matter?" asked Kidd, curiously, as he approached.

"Matter?" repeated Herbert. "Why, this man is no Indian."

"Ain't?"

"No."

"Then he must be a pale-face."

"That is what he is."

"Knowed it."

"What! you knew he was a white man, and yet shot him?"

"Sincerely that. Knowed he warn't no red-skin when he let out his death-yell. Don't know the chap, I s'pose?"

"Don't I? Why, he is no other than Crispin Quiggs, the dwarf!"

Sure enough, the little short body lying so still at their feet weltering in its life-blood, which stained the coarse garments and clotted the gray hair, was that of Crispin Quiggs. After parting with his friend, the diminutive wretch had joined the Indians, subsequently volunteering to swim over to the island and reconnoiter. His object in doing this, instead of being to further that of the savages, had been to seek an opportunity to shoot Richard Sedgewick. But in this attempt he had been happily foiled, had received his just deserts at the hands of those against whom he was working, and, as the old scout coolly remarked, the devil had his due.

In his death-spasm the dwarf had turned over on his back, in which position he now lay, limp and motionless, never to move again of himself. The face—ugly, calaverous little face that it was—was upturned to the sky, and was a horrible sight to look upon, with its natural ugliness enhanced by the frozen jaw, the ghastly, grinning teeth, and the staring, glassy eyes, not to mention that the whole was smeared with blood and brains.

"Is he dead?" whispered Tony, peeping under Kidd's arm.

"Dead?" chuckled the scout, kicking the lifeless form. "You can't be afraid with this sort of a fellow, or you wouldn't ask such a question as that. If even you'd be dead, too, of Kirby Kidd should draw bead on you?"

"Needn't trouble yourself to do it—I'll take yer word for

it," said Tony, drawing back at the very thought of such a thing.

"But we hain't got no time to stand by or pollywag," said Kidd, beginning to speak rapidly. "This streak made a deal of noise when he kicked the bucket, to say nothin' of the bark of my shoo-pi-iron, and then tells over yonder hows they're one man less jist as well as we do. Now you may make the hair on your head they're goin' to do somethin' in the manner of a bed-post, so it's my opinion we'd better take to the boats while we've got boats to take to."

"Will it not be ungenerous to leave Wapawan?" said Herbert.

"'Tain't a bit likely we could do him any good if we should stay," returned Kidd. "Me and the chief understand each other perfectly. We've been in just such corners as this afore, and we know when it's prudent to wait for one another. If he could talk to us now, he'd tell us to save ourselves and he'd save himself, 'cause ef he's in a difficulty you may bet yer life he don't want our help."

None of them objected to the ranger's course of action, and indeed none of them thought of doing so, since they were quite willing that he should be the leader of the party.

Leaving the diminutive corpse lying on the sand, they hastened to the spot where the two canoes were lying side by side, at the water's edge. They were about to embark, when Kidd put an end to the proceedings by holding up his hand with a low "sh! listen!" In an instant they were silent and listening. Then a soft splash was heard in the water, and a continued rippling sound as of some body or something swimming. Probably an Indian scout, coming to see how many whites were on the island.

Soon a dark, ball-like object was seen coming toward them, as if floating on the water. Kidd's rifle cracked loudly. Before the others, however, could guess that the object was a human head, a big Indian suddenly rose into view and lay flat on his back directly in front of them. Herbert, being nearest, caught his gun. The river rose and then up went the boat, while Kidd, with remarkable quickness, seized the pointed weapon of the young man, and arrested the boat.

The Indian was Wapawan the Wyandotte.

CHAPTER XVII.

A JONAH ABOARD.

KIDD was first to make the discovery that the Indian was their friend, Wapawah, and the latter owed his life, perhaps, to the ranger's keen-sightedness, and his astonishing celerity in preventing the descent of the clubbed rifle. But for this, Herbert would undoubtedly have felled his benefactor to the earth. However, this was a matter of too little importance to be allowed to dwell long on the mind at such a time as this, and the chief's safe arrival was a source of so much pleasure to his friends that they could not afford to think seriously of his narrow escape in landing among them.

Rapidly, and with characteristic brevity, Wapawah then gave an account of his experience after being left in the prisoner's chamber in the cavern. He related how Hamilton had escaped by hiding in a niche; how Quigs had proved himself a friend of the savages by mingling with them; how he, himself, had deceived his enemies by thrusting himself among them, and passing as a genuine Miami; how he had accompanied the party that followed the trail to the river, etc., etc.

"Tuck' P' exclaimed Kidd, looking triumphantly at Herbert and Mr. Selgwick. "I told you he'd slide out of the difficulty as slick as greased lightning' 'thout any help from us."

"De dwarf come over here to scout. Heard him scream 'You good?' said the Indian, more affirmatively than interrogatively.

The ranger chuckled quietly, and pointed toward the spot where Crispin Quigs had fallen.

"Come too close to my shanter," he observed, with careless humor. "Put a winder in his upper story, like."

"Miami's much angry—Wapawah much glad," said the Wyandott. "Me come to spy round little—see how many whites on de island."

"Of course you'll go back now, and report faithfully."

"Yes—of course," gravely replied the Indian, in whose nature a tinge of waggishness sometimes revealed itself.

"Wal, we're all hyur, now," said Kidd, "and thar's no need to tarry. Ef we don't leave this place party and hat, the chances are 'at we'll never leave it."

Wapawah agreed with him.

"Kidd speaks true," he said, hurriedly, "Must go now. No wait one—two—t'ree minate. *Nah!*"

"I'm a little juberous 'bout one thing," said Kidd, hesitatingly. "It's jist likely the red cusses kin see us when we start. 'Tain't very dark, though thar's no moon. What do you think, chief?"

Thus appealed to, the Wyandotte ran his keen, calculating eyes across the water, to the dark, wooded shore where the Miamis were anxiously awaiting his return—and back again.

"Miamis got sharp eyes," he said. "Dey may see us. Must be berry great careful. Ugh!"

"Wal, has yer got any thing to perpose?"

"Only one t'ing can do."

"Name it."

"Must take de canoes to udder side of island," hastily uttered the savage. "Den de island be 'tween us and enemies; dey no can see us; den we git in de canoes; den we float down de ribber close to de udder bank. Injun no can see us, den."

"But maybe thar's reds on that side of the river, too."

The Wyandotte shook his head.

"No Injun dere," he asserted, confidently.

"How do you know that?"

"Ugh! Wapawah 'mong de Injuns ober dere only minate ago. Wapawah know what dey doin'. None on t'other side ob ribber now—will be soon. Some went up de river to cross ober. We must be much quick."

This was enough. Wapawah's plan of action was estimated by all the most practicable that could be devised for the occasion. In fact, they reposed such confidence in his proverbial cunning and prudence, and his thorough knowledge of the enemies he had to contend with, that they were ready to follow him implicitly in any thing he proposed.

Instead of getting into the canoes, and coasting around the island to the opposite side, they thought of a quicker and safer mode of performing the circumnavigation—or of making a circumnavigation unnecessary. The vessels being both constructed of bark, they were consequently light and easy to handle, and it was Kidd's suggestion that they take them upon their shoulders and carry them across the island. Wapawah's craft was much the smallest of the two, and lifting it upon his shoulder he walked away, while the ranger and Herbert carried the other.

Passing through the willow grove, they soon came out upon a grassy bank. Here they launched the vessels.

"You'll take the lead, I s'pose?" said the ranger to Wapawah.

"Ugh!" replied the Indian.

"Jest as yer did comin' up?"

"Ugh!"

"All right. It's the best way, I reckon. But you'll have to take charge of one of these chaps. My shell won't carry 'em all, I'm afraid."

The Wyandotte selected Richard Sedgewick as the one to share his canoe. Mr. Sedgewick was quite nervous now, lest his hopes had been awakened only to be shattered again forever, but he took his seat in the Indian's canoe without a word, though he was all impatience to be off. The Wyandotte leaped in also, and took up the paddle. Kidd, Thurston and Crane then embarked, the paddles were dipped, and they glided out into the stream as noiselessly as a funeral cortege.

At first they bore toward the shore, but, when they were within a few feet of it, they turned to the left and floated quietly down-stream. Wapawah and Mr. Sedgewick were a little distance in advance, the former's piercing eyes flashing before and thither through the darkness, and his quick ears hearing every sound, and divining its cause, with an accuracy that was incredible. Kidd, who had control of the other bark, kept the latter on sight, and continually under his eye. It bore up like a feathered swan in front, and the other followed faithfully in its wake. In a minute or two the island was out of sight, and was being left far behind,

and then, believing they had hoolwinked the savages, the fugitives ventured to increase their speed a little. The paddles were handled with the utmost care, however, and as little noise as possible was made in dipping them, for they well knew that they were by no means out of danger, as yet. Indeed, they deemed it quite probable that they were followed. No idle conversations were indulged in; a word now and then was exchanged between them, but in soft whispers. Twice during their journey that night Kild paddled at the bow with a sudden start, and sat for a short time in a staring attitude. On each of these occasions he asserted that he heard a footstep on the shore nearest them, but on each occasion remarked, as he resumed his paddle:

"It mought 'a' been some sort of an animal, howsoever."

And this his companions concluded it was, since they continued their way unmolested, and without again hearing any thing like an indication that they were pursued.

The fugitives had accomplished perhaps four miles of their journey down the river, and were beginning to congratulate themselves on their fortunate escape, when an incident occurred that showed them they were still surrounded by the most appalling dangers. Ever since leaving the island they had kept near the west shore, but now, from some cause or other, Wapiwah led them even closer to the bank than they had hitherto ventured. All at once, the hub of a tree struck Tony Crane a pretty smart blow in the face. It was so sudden as to startle him out of his wits, and he fell back in the boat with a scream that made the woods fairly ring, with nothing in his mind but Indians and tomahawks.

"Murder! Help! I'm cut all to pieces!" he cried, at the top of his voice. "Pick me up—quick! I'm dyin'!—Oh, Lord! Tell Sam Rags to take good care of these bones!"

Before he could utter another word Kery Kall seized him by the throat, and almost choked him to death in his indignation.

"Want yer head, you black I find!" he roared, fairly shaking him with rage. "Want yer head, or by gosh I'll smash yer wind and e'ar into! You're not hurt—'cept your face as 'twas struck you. But you can't be hurt, 'cause you're gone and told the Injuns whar' we are. Open yer mouth, you

you squallin' baby, and may I be shot ef I don't chuck you overboard!"

To change the motion of his paddle, and give it a long backward sweep, was, for Wapawah, the work of an instant. In the same instant, almost, his canoe was alongside that of Kirby Kidd.

The Wynalotte, when made acquainted with the cause of the disturbance, made no reply, except to bestow upon the meddling Tony a look of frowning displeasure.

Just then a prolonged whoop—faint and far away, but so distinct that there was no mistaking it—came to their ears from some point up the river.

"That?" muttered Kidd; "*that* the result of his cater-waillin'—"

"'Sh! Listen!" interrupted Wapawah, in a whisper. "Be still. Don't breathe. Somebody comin'."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DAY IN CONCEALMENT.

A STEALTHY footstep was heard among the dry leaves, and every tongue was instantly silent. Secretly, however, had they locked their conversation, when the author of the footstep made its appearance in the shape of a human figure. At first its shape was rendered uncertain by the dark forest in the background, and more resembled a wavering shadow, but as it came on down the river-bank, they were enabled to distinguish it from other objects, and to decide that it was not any more nor less than an Indian. They remained as still as death, hardly hoping that unless they could make some sound to attract notice, they would remain unmoved. They crept slowly on, steadily, until they had almost reached the water's edge. Here he paused and stood erect. As if he had no object in view, except to reach the brink of the river, he remained standing there as motionless as the black tree-trunks behind him, apparently looking at nothing,

though the whites could not tell in which direction his face was turned.

After a few minutes of suspense, Wapawah leaned over and brought his mouth close to Kirby Kidd's ear.

"Miami warrior," he whispered. "He see us—can't help see us—got eyes on us now—watch us like hawk. Must not let him live—Wapawah must kill him with tomahawk—but wait a minute—if wait he give signal to others."

Kidd replied by a nod of approval. He had no sooner done so than he was conscious of a quick movement on the part of Wapawah. He heard something whiz through the air with deadly velocity, and saw it flash like a meteor as it darted by him.

Instantly there was a low cry, followed by a deep groan, and the Indian on shore sunk to the ground, with the Wyandotte's tomahawk buried to the helve in his brain.

"Good!" muttered the ranger, as Wapawah resumed his seat and snatched up his paddle. "That war well done. The skunk war goin' fur to give a yell, but his voice failed him."

"Ugh! follow me! Quick!" interrupted the chief.

As he spoke, his canoe darted forward like a shot. The other, propelled by the ranger, received a sudden impetus that sent it skimming with the speed of a fish after the first.

But what was their astonishment when they saw Wapawah turn deliberately into shore, instead of continuing his course down-stream. Without a single attempt to avoid the coming catastrophe, he dashed unhesitatingly toward the bank, as if careless of the consequences. In a moment the little canoe, with its two occupants, seemed to blend with the thick reed growth that bordered the river, and entirely disappeared.

Even Kirby Kidd was surprised by this unexpected maneuver, and declared if the Indians were really his Wapawah he should think twice before following. As it was, he did not hesitate, but looked straight toward the spot where the other vessel had melted from view.

But on reaching the spot, Wapawah and his companions were nowhere to be seen. The three men looked anxiously at one another. The scout, in a state of impatient anxiety, was on the point of giving a signal, when a strong light was

thrust forth from some invisible retreat, and a familiar voice spoke to them:

"Stoop down. Quick! Don't make noise."

The command was mechanically obeyed. Then the land seized the gunwale of the canoe, and instantly they felt the overturning bushes sweeping their shoulders as they were drawn in under the bank. When they raised their heads they were in total darkness. They had been drawn back about fifteen feet under a long, low, shelving rock, and found themselves in one of the safest and handiest hiding-places imaginable. A person on the river would not suspect its existence, even in the day-time.

"Hold me into buck-shot!" exclaimed the ranger, admiringly. "When did you discover this place, chief?"

"De last time I here 'fore dis," was the reply. "Miami on trail. Me find dis place—hide—Miami no catch."

"Blowed ef you can't allus find places to hide, when nobody else kin. I reckon Natur' never got up a 'etter red than you. You're sharper nor a steel-trap. But what's your object in comin' in hyar now? Mought slide on down the river till daylight."

"Den find no place to hide," said the Indian. "Night comin'—day comin'—best stay here."

"In course you're right; you allus are. But we'll have to lay hyar in these shells a good many hours."

"Yes," conceded the Indian; "maust stay all day here. Maust not go out till night come agin. Den we go home."

As a matter of course, it was any thing but a pleasant reflection that they were to sit there in the canoes the livelong day—bony, and tired, and wet as they were—but it did not seem so dreadful when they remembered that their only alternative was death.

The night passed away at last, and the cheerful light of another day flooded the earth. Very little of its light, however, penetrated the fugitives' hiding place. It was still dark there, though they could see each other now, and the darkness was not nearly so impressive as it had been in the night. It was now discovered that the entrance to this rock was secretly a dense growth of bushes, hanging so low that they dipped their leaves in the water, and veiled from prying eyes

what prying eyes would otherwise have explored. Shortly after day-break a sound was heard out on the water, which was very like the dip of paddles. Wapawah ventured to the entrance, and looked out. The others watched him anxiously. He soon came back, with the information that a canoe full of Indians had just passed down the river. This was ample proof that they were followed, and that the most prudent course for them to pursue was to remain quietly in their secluded retreat until they should again be favored by the friendly gloom of night. The hours dragged by slowly enough to our friends, sitting silently there in the little bark vessels, and Tony was quite firm in his opinion that two days had somehow got into one. Fortunately, they did not want for food, as there were provisions enough in the party to last all **that day and the next.**

In the afternoon the Wyandotte announced his intention of going out to take observations. He said he would probably not be back before night, but would certainly return in time to start at the proper time. Before going, he briefly explained a signal to Kidd, by which the latter was to be called to his assistance if necessary; but the rest were not to leave their places under any consideration whatever. When the Indian was gone, Kidd told his three companions that if they could catch a little sleep while they were waiting, they had better do it, since they were sadly in need of it, and would not have an opportunity to close their eyes during the coming night. He said he had long ago grown accustomed to want of sleep, and did not care to accompany them to the land of dreams; adding, that if he heard Wapawah's signal while they slept, he would wake them before leaving. Stretched as they were, it was no easy matter to get into a suitable position to win the spirit of slumber. But they managed it after several ineffectual attempts, and as they were all pretty well worn out, Mr. Selgwick, Herbert and Tony were soon sleeping soundly. The scout alone kept his eyes open. He sat upright with his gun in hand, listening intently for the signal agreed upon, hoping it would not be given, yet ready to answer it in a moment, if it should be. Thus the long afternoon passed away.

At last the light faded, and darkness began to settle down over all. Still the three men slept. All of a sudden Tony

Crane started up with a terrified scream, which awakened the other sleepers, and stared wildly about! Quick as thought Kidd had him by the throat.

"Be still, you cursed idiot!" he growled. "Be still, or I'll choke you to death? You alias have to yell out when you ought to be the stillest. Just the very minute afore you give that yell I heerd a foot-step right over our heads."

"Good Lord! You didn't though?" gasped Tony.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PERILOUS JOURNEY.

Just then a noise was heard among the bushes that overhung the water—a rustling, crackling noise, as of a heavy body moving among them. They looked in that direction, and saw the bushes shaking. Presently a black object was lowered from the bank above, and dropped noiselessly into the water. In a moment more the signal agreed upon between Kidd and the Wyandotte was given, and Wapawah was among them.

"Somebody hear! Must been him," he said, touching Tony.

"Yes, Wapawah," said Tony, "to be honest with you, it woke me as in that 'ere screen, but I didn't go fur to do it, to-day. I was dreamin', I was. I couldn't help it anyway. Didn't mean to skeer these fellers so bad, but they shouldn't be so skerry. If they hain't got no carriage 'tain't my fault."

"Wah!" growled the Indian, "you no courage. You spaw."

"I say, chief," muttered Kidd, leaning toward him, "is it dark enough outside to be on our way?"

"Soon be," was the laconic response.

"Come, we've got to go a long ways to-night, afore we can be sure that the present's given up," continued Kidd, "and we want to start early, unless there's nois layin' round!

in the vicinity, waitin' far us to come out. What have you l'arnt to day?"

"No reds near," answered the Wyandotte.

About half an hour after this, it was decided that the time had come when they should venture forth from their concealment, and resume their homeward journey.

So once more they went out upon the river, and glided silently away on its broad, placid bosom. Wapawah took the lead, just as he had done before, with the rescued captive in his canoe, while the others remained a little distance behind, following faithfully in his wake, and keeping him constantly under their eyes. It was a dark night—darker, in fact, than the preceding one—but Kidd said it was not dark enough to make it possible to run into danger by going unconsciously too near the shore, nor to lose their way by blundering into the mouths of tributaries. They kept as nearly in the middle of the stream as possible, leisurely assisting the current in the propulsion of the canoes, and keeping their eyes and ears open unceasingly.

No enemies were seen, and no suspicious sounds were heard, during the first hour of their journey. At the end of that time they came upon a scene which Wapawah and Kidd had been looking for all along, but which, to the rest, was entirely unexpected. In rounding an abrupt bend in the river, they suddenly came in range of a bright light, which flashed in their faces with startling effect. Right ahead of them, on a point of land that projected several yards out from the main land, a large fire was burning. Apparently, a dozen or more Indians were gathered around this fire, variously engaged in eating, drinking, smoking, etc. This sight was so unexpected and alarming to Tony, that he was startled into offering the suggestion that they turn back immediately. But his suggestion was not heeded, and he did not dare to repeat it, though he was terrified beyond measure by this unexpected and appalling danger. Wapawah did not stop nor look back—Kidd did not expect him to do either. The Indian, however, began to manage his paddle differently, causing his craft to gradually near that shore opposite the fire, and Kidd followed in the same manner. They were soon within striking distance of the dark side of the river. Still the keen eyes of the Indians

might have detected them, had they looked sharply in that direction. The careless dip of a paddle, or any slight noise, would, in all probability, have been the signal for their own destruction, but as these instruments were in the skilled hands of Wagon and Kild, and as Herbert held his hand over Tony's mouth, by the seer's directions, no noise was made, and the perilous passage was safely accomplished.

In a few moments the fire was behind them, and the fugitives once more floated along with the current, while their enemies were none the wiser. The greatest danger was now passed, and they continued on their way with lighter hearts.

Not long after passing the dangerous point mentioned, they drifted out of the Miami river into the broad Ohio. Up to this time the amount of labor required to propel the canoes was very trifling, but now they must go up-stream instead of down, against the strong current of a larger river, and thus the work was increased to such an extent that they found it necessary to take turns at the paddles. Up the Ohio they went, steadily and unobscured, toward Crumper's Station, still far away. It had seemed to them that the weary night would last forever, but just as the ever-wise Tony had doubted that it really was endless, it broke. The darkness crept away to hollow trees and caverns, and a flood of golden light gilded the earth. The sun rose in a cloudless sky, smiling and genial, and the fugitives hailed the glorious morning with hearts full of hope and gratitude. Kirby Kild and the Wyandots held a hurried consultation, agreeing—since there was no "sign" in that vicinity—that they might safely continue their journey under the light of the day, and by water, which was really the most exposed manner of traveling.

And so they went on and on, without even disembarking to rest their maddening heads, which they dispatched as they went.

About three hours after dawn, as they were still moving slowly up the Ohio, and when there was nothing unusual to be observed, they heard a cry—a long, loud, piercing cry, coming and repeating on the air around them!

It was the cry of a woman, and of a woman in distress.

CHAPTER XX.

EXECUT OMNES.

THE fugitives were startled by the scream, all the more that it evidently came from a woman. It rang through the forest arches, and through the air above them and on every side as if it were a knell from some distant and invisible source. They looked at one another in blank inquiry, and then turned their faces toward the shore whence the sound seemed to proceed.

But before they could speculate on the probable cause of the singular disturbance, the cause of it appeared to their astonished eyes.

A female figure, with hair streaming in the wind, and in every way a perfect picture of distress, suddenly burst from the shadows of the forest, and came running down the sloping bank to the river. She had almost run into the water before she stopped, and then she began to wring her hands wildly, and implore our friends, in pitious accents, to come ashore and save her!

"Hold me into back-shot if 'tain't a white woman!" ejaculated Kirby Kidd.

"My God!" cried Mr. Selgwick, looking; "look, Herbert, look! is it my—my daughter?"

Herbert Thurston started, and turned pale.

"By Heaven, you are right!" he exclaimed. "Run in to shore—quick! That woman is Miss Selgwick!"

"Good Lord, you don't think!" cried Kirby Kidd, jumping up so suddenly that the canoe was nearly tipped overboard.

If any other would have appeared, the cause of the alarm could be easily ascertained; but the woman was the same. An Indian, passing on a canoe, and looking on a painter, spring from the forest, and the white woman and her boat appeared, and the Indian woman was standing! She was then coming, and seemed to fly, two or three long leaps brought the Indian to her side, and

before she had taken a dozen steps, he had her by both arms, dragging her back toward the wood.

"Help! help!" she screamed, struggling to free herself. "Herbert! Herbert! save me! Oh, save me?"

Just then the crack of a rifle rent the air. They saw the Indian stop suddenly, release the maiden and clutch his breast with both hands, reel, stagger, give vent to a piercing shriek of mortal pain, and fall forward on his face!

The cunning hand of Wapawah, the Wyandotte, had sent the Indian messenger of death true to its aim.

The canoes were now whirled round by a single sweep of the paddles, and sent flying toward the shore. They all suspected that more savages were concealed in the wood, but they were ready to incur any risk for Vinnie Selgewick's sake, whose presence in that particular place was a mystery to them. The girl seemed partially stupefied by the sudden death of her dinky captor, and for awhile could do nothing but stand and stare at his prostrate form. But when the voyagers halted, she appeared to recover herself, and comprehending at once that they were her deliverers, ran to meet them with a glad cry.

We should like to linger on the joyful meeting of father and daughter, if we were capable of doing it justice, but feeling incompetent, we refrain. At first she stood pale and staring before the parent she had long thought dead, gazing at him as if she doubted the evidence of her own senses. Then he called her by name, and she fell fainting into his arms; but his warm embraces, his kisses and tears, soon restored her to herself, and when all was explained to her, from that hour to end, she had her head on her father's protecting bosom, and wept tears of ineffable joy. She could not find words to thank Herbert sufficiently, but blessed him instead, and told him that there could reward him for what he had done, while his heart beat quicker than it had ever beat before, and he blushed to the roots of his hair, and begged her not to mention it.

It was a happy reunion, and for awhile nobly bestowed a thought upon the slain savage lying so near them. How wonderful he would have remained unnoticed cannot be said, and not their attention been attracted toward him by a

groan preceeding from that direction. They looked at him, and, to their surprise, saw that he was still alive and had turned over on his back. His dark, expressive eyes were turned upon them, full of eloquent pleading, as if asking them to gather round him and hear his dying words.

In compliance with the mute request, they all moved toward him, willing to minister to his wants in his last moments.

But what was their amazement when, upon a closer scrutiny of his face, they discovered that the Indian was ~~not~~ an Indian, but Dick Hamilton disguised !

It was a startling discovery, and Vinnie was no less surprised than the rest, for she had not recognized her captor until this moment, when the supposed savage quietly wet his hand and rubbed the paint from his face. Then Herbert, Tony and Mr. Sedgewick, started back and exclaimed, simultaneously, " Dick Hamilton !" Yes, it was Dick Hamilton. In the disguise furnished by Crispin Quiggs, he had repaired to Crumper's Station, captured his fair cousin while she was gathering flowers in the wood, and stifling her screams, had made off with her. But on the beautiful morning, as they were near the river, she had caught sight of the voyagers, and had seen that they were people of her own color. With a scream she had broken away from her captor, and run down to the brink of the river, as we have seen, imploring the whites to come ashore and save her.

As soon as she recognized her cousin, all her own wrongs were forgotten, and sitting down on the ground, she tenderly pillowed his head on her lap. This unmerited treatment seemed to abash him, and he closed his eyes.

" Vinnie," he murmured. " Vinnie."

" Yes, cousin !" she answered, softly, as with gentle hands she smoothed his hair back from his brow.

" Forgive me, Vinnie ; forgive me, if you can. This demon, which prompted me to do you so great a wrong, is no longer a part of me, and it will be like your sweet nature to forgive me ; for I am dying now, Vinnie—I am dying now."

" You are forgiven," said the girl, as the tears began to course down her cheeks ; " but why do you talk of death ? Let father look at your wound, and dress it. It may be nothing serious."

Mr Selgwick dropped upon his knees beside his nephew, with a hope that something might yet be done; but the wounded man waved him off, and shook his head.

"I thank you," he said, "but it's useless. In a few minutes I will be gone. Uncle, I shot at you in the cave; can you forgive me?"

"Don't speak of it, Dick, my boy," returned his uncle, soothingly; "there is not one here who remembers the past against you now."

"It was all through love for Vinnie," he murmured, as if speaking to himself. "My father, as her guardian, had given her to me, but I knew her father would never have consented, had he been alive. I overheard a conversation between Thurston and Wapiwah. They were going in search of the lost man. A demon possessed me. Procuring the services of Quiggs, the dwarf, I followed them for the purpose of frustrating their plans. Where is the dwarf?"

"Gone under," replied Kirby Kidd, as the rest remained silent. "Shot him squar' through the upper story."

Hamilton was silent for some minutes after this, his lips moving as if in prayer. Then, opening his eyes, he looked at every one of them separately, saying, each time he removed his gaze from one to another, "Good-by."

"Vinnie," will you kiss me?" he said, unable now to raise his voice above a whisper: "Will you kiss me, Vinnie?"

She did so, weeping quietly. His face brightened then, and a few minutes later he breathed his last.

They buried him where he had fallen. He had died penitent, and neither time nor pains were spared in performing this last tribute of respect to his mortal remains, and in making it all that could have been expected by him.

One year ago, on the banks of the Ohio, the tree bearing the following inscription remained unmolested: "Richard S. Hamilton, killed and buried on this spot, October 11, 1784." In all probability the tree is still standing, as we have heard nothing to the contrary.

The little party reached home in good time, and were cordially welcomed by their friends. In fact, on the evening after their arrival, the block-house of Crumper's Station was brilliantly illuminated for a grand social gathering, in honor

of Richard Sedgewick's return. There was music and dancing and hilarity to the highest degree, and ever after the people of the station remembered that night as one of the pleasantest of their lives. To cap the climax, they put up an impromptu wedding, and Helen Tarleton and Virginia Sedgewick were the happy couple—her own and her father's consent having been obtained at the same time. Of course, Pony was vastly astonished at this proceeding, and didn't see how in creation Vinnie was going to marry both of them, until some one good naturedly reminded him that she would probably never marry *him*.

Kirby Kidd and Wapawah, the Wyandotte, remained in the service of the country until their death.

Blue School Series—Dialogues.

DIME DIALOGUE, No. 14.

[illegible]

Refinement. Acting charade. Several characters
of the cast. The number of the cast. The number of the cast.
A conclusive argument. For two girls.
A conclusive argument. For two girls.
Kinn's work (10 minutes). For four girls.
Kinn's work (10 minutes). For four girls.
Kinn's work (10 minutes). For four girls.
Kinn's work (10 minutes). For four girls.
Kinn's work (10 minutes). For four girls.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 15.

60 little philosopher. For two little girls.
Aunt Polly's lesson. For four ladies.
4 wind-mill. Acting charade. For a number.
Will it pay? For two boys.

The heretic. For three ladies.
The little lady with the white dress.
A safety razor. For three ladies.
The foreigner's tobacco. For two ladies.
The cat without an owner. Several characters.
Natural selection. For three gentlemen.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 16.

P. The Ann. For four ladies and one gentleman.
 The meeting of the wains. For a couple.
 The good they had. For a lady.
 The boy who wins. For six gentlemen.
 Good-bye day. A colloquy. For three girls.
 The sick well man. For three boys.
 The meeting of the communists. For nine ladies.
 A letter to the young. For four boys.

The maps of the world, for geography.
The doctors, for medicine.
Kitty's lessons, for grammar.
Stratagem, Charade, for several characters.
Testing her scholars, for numerous questions.
The world as we live, for the present.
The old and the new, for general knowledge.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 17.

LITTLE FOLKS' SPEECHES AND DIALOGUES.

[illegible][illegible]

DIME DIALOGUES No. 18.

The little intercessor. For four ladies.

Lost Charlie; or, the gipsy's revenge, a
numerous characters.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 19.

[illegible]

The auction. For numerous character

Dime School Series—Dialogues.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 20.

The wrong man. Three males and three females.
Afternoon calls. For two little girls.
Nell's present. For four boys.
Judge not. For teacher and several scholars.
Telling dreams. For four little ladies.
Saved by love. For two boys.
Mistaken identity. Two males and three females.
Can't read English. For 3 males and 1 female.
A little Venetian. For six little girls.
"Sold." For three boys.

An air castle. For five males and three females.
City manners and country hearts. For three girls and one boy.
The silly dispute. For two girls and teacher.
Not one there! For four male characters.
Foot-print. For numerous characters.
Keeping boarders. Two females and three males.
A cure for good. One lady and two gentlemen.
Their odious wiles. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 21.

A successful donation party. For several.
Out of debt out of danger. For three males and three females.
The Red Riding Hood. For two children.
How she made him propose. A duet.
The house on the hill. For four females.
Evidence enough. For two males.
Worth and wealth. For four females.
Waterfall. For several.

Mark Hastings' return. For four males.
Cinderella. For several children.
Too much for Aunt Matilda. For three females.
Wit against wit. Three females and one male.
A sudden recovery. For three males.
The double stratagem. For four females.
Counting chickens before they were hatched. For four males.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 22.

The Dark Cupid; or, the mistakes of a morning. For three gentlemen and two ladies.
That Ne'er-do-well; or, a brother's lesson. For two males and two females.
High art; or the new mania. For two girls.
Strange adventures. For two boys.
The king's supper. For four girls.
A practical exemplification. For two boys.
Monsieur This in America; or, Yankee vs. Frenchman. For four boys.
Dixy's diplomacy. 3 females and 'incidentals.'
A Frenchman; or, the outwitted aunt. For two ladies and one gentleman.

Titania's banquet. For a number of girls.
Boys will be boys. For two boys and one girl.
A rainy day; or, the school-girl philosophers. For three young ladies.
God is love. For a number of scholars.
The way he managed. For 2 males, 2 females.
Fandango. Various characters, white and otherwise.
The little doctor. For two tiny girls.
A sweet revenge. For four boys.
A May day. For three little girls.
From the sublime to the ridiculous. For 14 males.
Heart not face. For five boys.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 23.

Rhoda Hunt's remedy. For 3 females, 1 male.
Hant Schmidt's recommendation. For two males.
Cheery and Grumble. For two little boys.
The phantom doughnuts. For six females.
Does it pay? For six males.
Company manners and home impoliteness. For two males, two females and two children.
The glad days. For two little boys.
Unfortunate Mr. Brown. For 1 male, 6 females.
The real cost. For two girls.

A bear garden. For three males, two females.
The busy bees. For four little girls.
Checkmate. For numerous characters.
School time. For two little girls.
Death scene. 2 principal characters and adjuncts.
Dress and gold. Several characters, male and female.
Confused Miller. For three males, two females.
Ignorance vs. justice. For eleven males.
Pedants all. For four females.

DIME DIALOGUES, No. 24.

The goddess of liberty. For nine young ladies.
The three graves. For three little girls.
The music director. For seven males.
A strange secret. For three girls.
An unjust man. For four males.
The shop girl's victory. 1 male, 3 females.
The psychometist. 2 gentlemen, 2 ladies.
Money is no wind for it. For four ladies.
Water seal. A number of characters, both sexes.
Blessed are the peacemakers. Seven young girls.

The six brave men. For six boys.
Have you heard the news?
The true queen. Two young girls.
A slight mistake. 4 males, 1 female and several auxiliaries.
Lazy and busy. Ten little fellows.
The old and young. 1 gentleman.
That postal card. 3 ladies and 1 gentleman.
Mother Goose and her household.
School fancy dress dialogue and travesty.

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